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THE DICKENSIAN

EDITED BY WALTER DEXTER

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR DICKENS LOVERS

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AND OTHER ARTICLES

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

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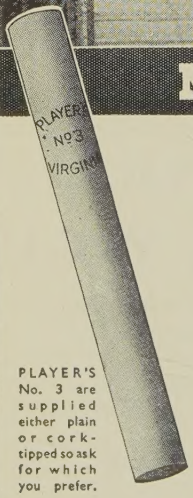

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Vol. XXXV. WINTER 1938-39 No. 249

Border by [*Ruth Whittaker*

A Notable Birthday Dinner. Descendants of some of Dickens's personal friends will be the guests at the Birthday Dinner in London on the seventh of February next, an event which in public interest is likely to surpass that of the Pickwick Centenary Dinner three years ago. Lord Hewart will take the chair, and among the guests will be Lord Lytton, General Sir Nevil Macready, Mr. Douglas Jerrold, Mr. W. L. Bradbury, Mr. K. R. G. Browne, Mr. Compton Mackenzie (grandson of Emmeline Montague and Henry Compton), Mr. Francis Meynell (grandson of Christiana Weller and T. J. Thompson), and Miss Giles (grand-daughter of Dickens's Chatham schoolmaster). This is the first time that so many descendants of the Dickens circle have been gathered together at a Birthday Dinner.

The Dickens family will be represented by Mr. Henry Charles Dickens and others.

* * * * *

Overseas Branches. The air mail to Australia and New Zealand is bringing our many branches there in much quicker communication with London than ever before, and it is hoped that Secretaries of our branches in the Antipodes will make a point of sending their syllabuses for inclusion in the Diary so that the world can see what they are doing to spread the love of Dickens, and the spirit of the Fellowship. We have recently had two examples of the need of this. The Syllabus of the Christchurch branch for the season commencing April 2nd did not reach us until August 20th, after the September number had already gone to press. This was a great pity, for this branch is doing very good work, having, during the season, dealt thoroughly with *Oliver Twist*, papers being read on the Women of the book, the Workhouse People, the Rogues and Villains, and

the Benefactors. Sketches were also performed, and at the end of the season, under the leadership of Mr. S. R. Knapp, the book was considered as a work of literature. In December there is to be a Tiny Tim outing. Another Antipodean branch expresses surprise and disappointment that no mention of their work has appeared in *The Dickensian* lately. This is true, for the last report was in the Spring number of 1937 ; since which date we have received no further reports.

* * * * *

Ourselves. For several years now all new branches of the Fellowship are obliged to fix their subscriptions so as to include a copy of *The Dickensian* to each household. (Second and subsequent members at the same address may pay a smaller subscription without the magazine).

A few of the older branches also fell in with this idea ; but many have feared to take such a step, feeling it might result in a decrease in their membership. Two branches in British Columbia, the Vancouver and the Victoria branches, as already noted in these pages, although several hundred miles apart, often make exchange of lecturers and members. The Victoria branch was formed under the new rule, and *The Dickensian* has played such a part in its life and growth that Vancouver resolved they would not be behind, and at the beginning of the present session, increased their subscription to include the magazine. It has been a source of much gratification to read in a letter just to hand from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Victor Ackroyd, " I am proud that we are able to announce the subscription covering the magazine ; there was no demur on the part of anyone paying their dues at the opening meeting." Now, who's to be the next ? The *Dickensian* is your own magazine, and it is surely a Pickwickian state of affairs if every member of the Fellowship does not subscribe for a copy either direct or indirect.

* * * * *

Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Edwards. All readers of *The Dickensian* will wish to join us in offering hearty congratulations to the late honoured Hon. Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship, Mr. A. W. Edwards, and Mrs. Edwards on the celebration of their Golden Wedding on October 4th last.

Many, many more happy years together, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards !

* * * * *

Correcting an Error. By an unfortunate error, some copies of the Autumn number of *The Dickensian* were cut to a smaller size than usual. If those readers desirous of binding will kindly notify the Hon. Secretary at 48 Doughty Street when ordering a copy of the Index, which is now ready, an uncut copy will be sent free of charge.

* * * * *

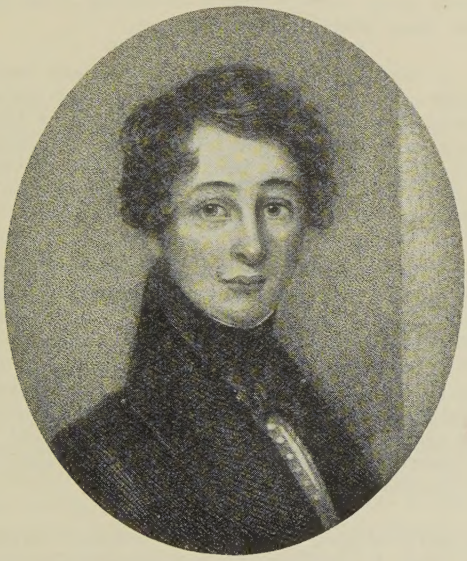
The Book for the Season. Two interesting articles on *Nicholas Nickleby* will be found in the current issue. It is not possible for us to reprint any of the many interesting articles which we have had in the past on other phases of the Book for the Season, but

we would remind readers that a very full account of the Cheeryble Brothers by Mr. F. R. Dean appeared in 1930, pages 142-9.

* * * * *

The Earliest Known Portrait of Dickens.

This earliest known portrait of Dickens, a miniature by his aunt, Janet Barrow, was referred to in the last number. It is one of the many gifts with which Count de Suzannet has enriched The Dickens House. Before her marriage to Edward Barrow, Janet Ross had achieved great repute as a miniature painter. Benjamin West, P.R.A., in a letter



dated 14th June, 1816, expressed his high opinion of her work. Landseer once made a pencil sketch of her, and after her death his sister, Mrs. Mackenzie, purchased this miniature from Janet Barrow's daughter.

The accompanying copy of the portrait in black and white does not do justice to its exquisite colouring, and a visit should be paid to the Dickens House to inspect the original.

* * * * *

All over the World.

The universality of the contributors to the *Dickensian* is more than ever exemplified by the articles in the present number. They have been provided by readers in London, Edgware, Gravesend, Oxford, Kettering, Newport, Hove, Montreal, Seattle, Vancouver, and Hollywood.

* * * * *

"Welcome to Ba—ath . . . . Most Welcome to Ba—ath."—Dickens Fellowship Conference, May 26—29, 1939.

WALTER DEXTER.

ROAST PIG, COLDS AND NIGHTCAPS

By MRS. NICKLEBY

I don't know how it is, but a fine, warm, summer day like this, with the birds singing in every direction, always puts me in mind of roast pig, with sage and onion sauce, and made gravy . . .

* * * * *

Roast pig—let me see. On the day five weeks after you were christened we had a roast—no, that couldn't have been a pig either, because I recollect there were a pair of them to carve, and your poor papa and I could never have thought of sitting down to two pigs—they must have been partridges.

* * * * *

Roast pig ! I hardly think we ever could have had one, now I come to remember, for your papa could never bear the sight of them in the shops, and used to say that they always put him in mind of very little babies, only the pigs had much fairer complexions ; and he had a horror of little babies, too, because he couldn't very well afford any increase to his family, and had a natural dislike to the subject. It's very odd now, what can have put that in my head ?

* * * * *

I really am very subject to colds, indeed very subject. I had a cold once, I think it was in the year eighteen hundred and seventeen ; let me see, four and five are nine, and—yes, eighteen hundred and seventeen, that I thought I never should get rid of ; actually and seriously, that I thought I never should get rid of. I was only cured at last by a remedy that I don't know whether you ever happened to hear of. You have a gallon of water as hot as you can possibly bear it, with a pound of salt and sixpen'orth of the finest bran, and sit with your head in it for twenty minutes every night just before going to bed ; at least, I don't mean your head—your feet.

* * * * *

It's a most extraordinary cure—a most extraordinary cure. I used it for the first time, I recollect, the day after Christmas Day, and by the middle of April following the cold was gone. It seems quite a miracle when you come to think of it, for I had it ever since the beginning of September.

* * * * *

There's a great deal of comfort in a nightcap, as I'm sure you would confess, Nicholas, my dear, if you would only have strings to yours, and wear it like a Christian, instead of sticking it upon the very top of your head, like a blue-coat boy.

You needn't think it an unmanly or quizzical thing to be particular about your nightcap, for I have often heard your poor dear papa, and the Reverend Mr. what's-his-name, who used to read prayers in that old church with the curious little steeple that the weathercock was blown off the night week before you were born—I have often heard them say that the young men at college are uncommonly particular about their nightcaps, and that the Oxford nightcaps are quite celebrated for their strength and goodness ; so much so, indeed, that the young men never dream of going to bed without 'em, and I believe it's admitted on all hands that *they* know what's good, and don't coddle themselves.

SOME BY-WAYS IN *NICHOLAS NICKLEBY*

Drawn by] [*Edward F. Payne*

BY A. E. BROOKES CROSS

I.

THE question whether books should be re-read has recently been the subject of radio debate. Views were conflicting, some contributors holding that it is waste of time to read any book twice; others, that some books could scarcely be read too often. Obviously the matter is one for individual decision. In my opinion, many of the Dickens novels can be read twice or oftener with profit and enjoyment; others of them, however, are better read into—after the first reading—than throughout.

To return to a book, familiar in youth, after a lapse of half a life-time and to recapture the early thrill is a test that few books can stand up to. Not merely is it that judgment has matured, but one's background has enlarged and the simpler faith of youth has made way for a more critical and often, unhappily perhaps, cynical outlook.

This somewhat trite and possibly disputable reflection is prompted by a recent reperusal of *Nicholas Nickleby*, a novel still being read, a hundred years after its first appearance. Parts of this novel remain as fresh and entertaining as ever, particularly in respect of the humorous elements, both incidents and persons, but let it be confessed parts of it bore and irritate.

It would be supererogatory and presumptuous to offer, or attempt to offer, a criticism of what may now be regarded as a minor classic; but a few random observations, in lighter vein, on some curiosities to be found therein may not be out of place.

It seems to have been incumbent on novelists of the period to commence a narrative with a sort of family tree which may interest the reader by the manner of its telling, but contributes little or nothing of value to an understanding of the characters of the principal actors or of their subsequent environment. *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* is no exception to the custom. All that the reader need know of the hero's pedigree could have been told in a few lines instead of the thousand or so Dickens devoted to the subject. This method of opening a story, in the hands of a lesser writer than Dickens, would, I fear, prove fatal to its prospects in these less leisurely times.

Early in the book we read that Mr. Squeers, in his indignation at

his prospective pupil in the coffee-room of " The Saracen's Head " sneezing at an inappropriate moment, " knocked him off the trunk with a blow on one side of his face, and knocked him on again with a blow on the other." There was a time when this incident—or rather the relation of it—provoked a chuckle of delight, but mature reading, merely incites a wry smile and only the impossibility of the event stares one brazenly in the face. It is probably one of the most flagrant examples of so-called humour to be found in a novel and contrasts forcibly with the humour of to-day which relies for its flavour mainly on irony and understatement.

The description of the first (and only) meeting of the " United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company, capital five millions, in five hundred thousand shares of ten pounds each " is burlesque at its richest and most laughable, but the propriety for introducing such far-fetched extravagances in a story otherwise intended to be taken seriously is arguable. It is alien to the normal novel of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, one may be sceptical as to whether a story of unrelieved seriousness—and sometimes gloom—preserving " the unities," might not afford more real enjoyment (the chief purpose of a novel in my opinion) by weaving here and there a little " comic relief " into the fabric ; a practice, by the way, which Mr. Wells for instance, in his most successful novels rarely fails to observe.

Nor were Phiz's illustrations free from the vice of exaggeration—for instance, the size of the little boys and girls, fully breeched and skirted, appear in juxtaposition to their elders to approximate in height to infants of three years of age. One may reasonably doubt whether the nether limbs (as the Victorians would call them) of Newman Noggs were capable of sustaining his enormous height and his inflated head without disaster. Again, I doubt if ever there was a theatre of such singular proportions—certainly not at Portsmouth—as that depicted by Phiz as the scene of Miss Snevellicci's " bespeak." A theatre with about five rows of pit—a row seating some half a dozen or so spectators, to judge by the section illustrated—and boxes in which the heads practically touch the ceiling ; not to mention the disproportionate figures, notably that of the ginger-beer boy, that complete the picture. The textual description of the benefit, however, is in Dickens's best vein. Despite their grotesqueness, however, the novel would not seem the same to older readers without these drawings, so closely are they associated with it. Whether such a view is held by readers of a more recent generation is questionable. It is possible that in an age of so-called realism, the pictures might mislead potential readers by conveying a distorted idea of the intrinsic value of the whole.

Speaking of theatres, one wonders from what unrecorded source Smike had derived any ideas on the subject. " Is this a theatre," whispered Smike in amazement, " I thought it was a place of light and finery," when he was taken " behind the scenes " for the first time.

II.

The dialogues between 'Tilda, the miller's daughter, and Miss Squeers are beyond price. " You are monstrous polite, Ma'am," said Miss Price—in the Congreve manner—in one of the numerous disagreements with Fanny Squeers, while on another occasion, the latter remarked, " What a situation ! on the brink of unconsciously destroying the peace and happiness of my own 'Tilda." Expressions, one must assume, which had been culled by these ladies from fashionable journals of the period. How Dickens delighted to put into the mouths of his illiterate, but aspiring, characters extravagant rhetoric, best expressed by the

Ralph Nickleby and Newman Noggs

From a Sketch by Sir John Millais, R.A.

(Original kindly lent by the late W. T. Spencer)

phrase " high falutin'." Recall the following: " Oh, ma'am, how witty you are," retorted Miss Squeers with a low curtsey, " almost as witty, ma'am, as you are clever," or " I throw you off for ever, Miss. I abandon you. I renounce you," or again, " This is the hend, is it, of all my forbearance for that double-faced thing—that viper, that—that—mermaid ? " There's richness for you, as Squeers himself once said in another connection !

And even Squeers himself could rise to unexpected heights in the declamatory manner when in his cups : " My family ! " hiccupped Mr. Squeers, raising his eye to the ceiling, " my daughter, as is at an age

when all the sensibilities is a coming out strong in blow—my son, as is the young Norval of private life, and the pride and ornament of a doting village—here's a shock for my family ! The coat of arms of the Squeerses is tore, and the sun is gone down into the ocean wave ! " Faint forecast of the words of another creation of Dickens yet to be born !

III.

The social standing of that most entertaining family, the Kenwigses, presents a problem of economic interest. A family of seven when first introduced, to be increased to eight before the tale is ended, occupying " the whole of the first floor, comprising a suite of two rooms " in a dingy and battered tenement house, " a thought dirtier than any of its neighbours " in a tumble-down street, the two elder olive branches of which attended a dancing school in addition to being instructed with their sisters in the " French language as spoken by natives " at the weekly stipend of five shillings a week ! One may feel grateful, for their sakes, that their affluent relative's official duty was confined to the collection of revenue and did not include those of sanitary inspector.

The mystery of Miss La Creevy, however, transcends even that of the Kenwigses. How did she earn her living or had she private means ? True, she was a miniature painter and exhibited a gilt frame displaying specimens of her alleged art, but there is no other evidence that she actively followed it, except on the occasion when she did a portrait of Kate Nickleby—presumably for love. She occupied the upper portion (first, second and attic floors) of a house in the Strand—described by Disraeli as " perhaps, the finest street in Europe " at the time—and presumably the rent was substantial. The Nicklebys occupied the second floor as lodgers for two extremely short periods—on each occasion of which rooms were conveniently vacant—and in view of the state of the family exchequer, one may assume the rent paid to have been rather less than remunerative. Further, Miss La Creevy found no difficulty in leaving the pursuit of art for days at a time to assist her friends and on one occasion for a whole month. She lived alone, with a servant, however, and the only relative she had was a brother whom she had not heard of (until late in the story) for fifteen years ! The unrecorded history of Miss La Creevy would, I think, form an intriguing study in the manner of the published treatises on that other celebrated, but shadowy character, Dr. Watson !

IV.

The catalogue of curiosities is by no means exhausted, but I will limit further reflections to the feats of endurance performed by travellers —by coach and on foot—in those times. We read of Squeers and his diminutive pupils riding outside a coach for two days on the journey to Greta Bridge in the bitterest of weather, apparently suffering from little else but discomfort—no ill after-effects. To-day we hesitate to

sit on the open upper deck of an omnibus and require a closed saloon for a shopping expedition. And the walking feats ! What a commentary on present-day activities in this direction. Is it to be wondered at that we need to play (*sic*) at athletic games and join " keep fit " organisations ? Newman Noggs, who appears to have subsisted largely on potent liquors (though how he could have maintained himself at all on " rather less than the usual wages of a boy of thirteen " is itself a mystery) ; Newman Noggs, I repeat, could walk towards Godalming on a cold and foggy morning with Nicholas for more than two hours each way before breakfast and his daily labours. Even the semi-starved and emaciated Smike not only accompanied the expedition but continued the journey with Nicholas to within twelve miles of Portsmouth ! A performance compared to which his daily walk from Bow to the City and back seems a mere stroll. That middle-aged and eloquent lady, Mrs. Nickleby, could accomplish the journey from Thames Street to Cavendish Square (and back) of an evening to meet her daughter. Miss La Creevy shared this capacity for pedestrianism for she too could step from the Strand to Cavendish Square before the morning meal, immediately after which she found no recorded difficulty in proceeding on foot with Nicholas to Thames Street.

Even aged (if he ever could become really aged) Tim Linkinwater had a habit of strolling from the City to Bow on summer evenings—but in justice it must be admitted that he lingered somewhat in that delightful cottage of the Nicklebys before retracing his steps—" and so to bed."

V.

As a fitting conclusion to these meanderings among a few of the by-ways of this illustrious work let me recall the following tribute written by Dickens's greatest contemporary, Thackeray :

> All children ought to love him (Dickens). I know one who, when she is happy, reads *Nicholas Nickleby* ; when she is unhappy reads *Nicholas Nickleby* ; when she is tired, reads *Nicholas Nickleby ;* when she is in bed, reads *Nicholas Nickleby* ; when she has nothing to do, reads *Nicholas Nickleby* ; and when she has finished the book, reads *Nicholas Nickleby* over again. This candid young critic, at ten years of age, said, " I like Mr. Dickens's books much better than your books, Papa " ; and frequently expressed her desire that the latter author should write a book like one of Mr. Dickens's books. Who can ? . . . .
>
> What a kind light of benevolence it is that plays round Crummles and the Phenomenon, and all those poor theatre people in that charming book ! What a humour and what a good humour ! I coincide with the youthful critic, whose opinion has just been mentioned, and own to a family admiration for *Nicholas Nickleby*.

There seems no more to be said !

" Welcome to Ba—ath . . . . . Most Welcome to Ba—ath." Dickens Fellowship Conference, May 26—29.

THE COCK LANE GHOST

By EDITH M. DAVIES

AT some time or another during the course of our " piljian's projiss through a mortal wale " most of us have to answer that solemn question : " Do you believe in ghosts ? "

There are two conventional replies to this. We may answer defiantly : " No ! of course not ! There are no such things as ghosts," and the subject is abruptly closed. Or we may hesitate somewhat : " Well, I can't exactly say, never having actually seen a ghost. But a distant relation of mine by marriage had a friend who once had a queer experience . . ." The adventure is then narrated in detail and this starts a ghost-story-telling competition which grows ever more thrilling as night advances.

In *The Steam Excursion, Sketches by Boz*, Dickens writes : " Sea-sickness is like a belief in ghosts—everyone entertains some misgiving on the subject, but few will acknowledge any." We know for a fact that Dickens suffered from sea-sickness (*American Notes*, ch. 2) and though I am not quite so certain that he believed in ghosts, I am convinced that he had a great liking for them, judging from the number that he introduced into his own books. He also had a wide knowledge of their eccentric behaviour and hair-raising histories.

Now, if Dickens liked one ghost more than another, I think that he in common with many other Londoners of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—had a partiality for the Cock Lane Ghost, for in his writings there are more references to this particular phantom than to any other.

In our book of the year, Mrs. Nickleby remarks, apropos of Smike's low spirits : " I hope that this unaccountable conduct may not be the beginning of his taking to his bed and living there all his life like . . the Cock Lane Ghost." Later, she refers to " the Cock Lane Ghost behaving in an improper manner to the clergyman."

Mrs. Pipchin, the " child-queller " in *Dombey and Son* (ch. 8) had a way of " knocking angrily at the wall like the Cock Lane Ghost revived," when the children disturbed her afternoon nap by romping too loudly in the adjacent Dungeon ; Guster, Mrs. Snagsby's long-suffering servant (*Bleak House*, ch. 19) came " rustling and scratching down the little staircase like a popular ghost," (probably the Cock Lane Ghost) ; and from the third paragraph of *A Tale of Two Cities* we learn : " It was the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five . . . The Cock Lane Ghost had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its messages."

If we combine this information (like the Pickwickian gentleman who studied Chinese metaphysics), we gather that the Cock Lane Ghost was a noisy, bed-ridden phenomenon, lacking in respect for the clergy and haunting the upper part of a house in Cock Lane about the year 1763. So it was, but that is not all about it.

In the year 1760, the clerk of the Parish of St. Sepulchre's, a Mr.

Parsons, lived in a small house in Cock Lane, a narrow turning near West Smithfield. In addition to his family he had two lodgers—a Mr. Kent, a stockbroker, and his sister-in-law, Miss Fanny. Though Mr. Kent (a widower) and Miss Fanny (surname unknown) were openly in love with each other, they were prevented from marrying by the old canon law which forbade a man marrying his deceased wife's sister. Very soon, Parsons, a chronic spendthrift, began borrowing money from Mr. Kent, and eventually this led to so much unpleasantness that the lodgers quitted Cock Lane and took other apartments at Clerkenwell. A little later Miss Fanny died of smallpox and was buried in Clerkenwell Church. It was a fact, known and proved, that she had made a will in favour of her brother-in-law, and soon after her death he came into her property.

Nearly two years later a rumour was set about the neighbourhood that the real cause of Fanny's death was not smallpox but arsenical poisoning and that her murderer was none other than Mr. Kent. This information purported to come from Fanny's ghost which frequently appeared to Parsons' daughter—a child about twelve years old, whose bedroom Fanny had sometimes shared in Cock Lane.

Parsons developed a strong talent for publicity, so much so that the story spread through London and beyond, even into the suburbs. As scores of people, their curiosity aroused, came flocking to the house, he charged a fee for admission, greatly to his financial benefit. Visitors were informed that the ghost would never arrive till after dark when little Miss Parsons was safely in bed, but that then it would announce itself by ghostly knockings. A single knock signified " Yes," a double knock " No " and thus the ghost could answer questions put to it by anyone in the bedroom. A scratching sound, however, indicated anger, and visitors were requested not to provoke the spirit by incredulity or irreverent mirth. At times the ghost manifested a very human way of remaining utterly silent in uncongenial company !

Séances were held nightly with more or less success. Once, when " three clergymen and about twenty other people including two negroes " were present, one of the clergymen subjected the ghost to a lengthy interrogation, in the course of which an answer particularly interesting to Dickensians was elicited.

Clergyman : " How was the poison administered : in beer ? "
Ghost : Two knocks. (" No.")
Clergyman : " In purl ? "
Ghost : One knock. (" Yes.")

It will be remembered that purl was the beverage for which Dick Swiveller had a special recipe and to which he introduced the Marchioness some years later !

Among the more distinguished visitors to the ghost were the Duke of York, Dr. Johnson, and Horace Walpole. The latter wrote to George Montagu at the end of January, 1762, when the sensation was at its height :

" I went to hear it, for it is not an apparition but an audition . . .

The Lane was full of mob and the house so full we could not get in. At last they discovered it was the Duke of York, and the company squeezed themselves into one another's pockets to make room for us.

"The house, which is borrowed and to which the ghost has adjourned, is wretchedly small and miserable. When we entered the chamber, in which were fifty people, with no light but one tallow candle at the end, we tumbled over the bed of the child to whom the ghost comes, and whom they are murdering by inches in such insufferable heat and stench."

But alas for the gossip-loving, letter-writing Horry ! Though he stayed until "half an hour after one," the ghost refused to manifest itself that night. It was a similar piece of ghostly discourtesy that provoked Mrs. Nickleby's disapproval and furthermore led directly to the solution of the mystery.

The Reverend Mr. Aldritch of Clerkenwell induced the ghost to promise that it would appear independently of the child Parsons and away from Cock Lane, in the vault of Clerkenwell Church where it would announce its presence by knocking on Fanny's coffin-lid.

On the appointed night—February 1st, 1762—at one a.m., Mr. Aldritch, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Kent, and several others repaired to the church, descended to the vault, and standing by the coffin called on the ghost to give the signal. It failed to do so. Polite requests and urgent commands for it to appear, to knock, even to scratch, were all in vain. (Several masculine and misanthropic commentators have since remarked that this incident of keeping gentlemen waiting at a trysting-place leaves no doubt as to the sex of the ghost ; and probably this was the "improper behaviour" condemned by Mrs. Nickleby. That worthy lady, being something of a stickler for decorum, knew very well that in polite society, promises and appointments, once made, must never be broken unless for some very urgent reason.) After long and fruitless waiting, the party quitted the church and, their suspicions aroused, returned to Mr. Aldritch's house near by, where Miss Parsons was spending the night, closely guarded by several ladies.

It was now recollected that the rappings had never been heard by day or candle-light and never when—as sometimes had been arranged —the child's hands had been bound or held outside the bed clothes. It was also remembered that the ghost had been silent—perhaps to mark its displeasure at the indignity—when, as sometimes happened, visitors insisted on searching both the child and the bed before the séance began. So in the dawn of this fateful February 1st, the wretched child was dragged out of bed and ordered to "own up."' For days she stood out against a most searching inquisition, persisting in her story, but finally threats of Newgate scared her into telling the truth.

The Cock Lane Ghost was an elaborate plot designed by Parsons to defame Mr. Kent to whom he was deeply in debt and to put money in his own pocket. The ghostly sounds were actually produced by means of a piece of board which Miss Parsons concealed beneath her night-

gown and on which she rapped and scratched under cover of darkness and bed-clothes.

Parsons was brought to trial, found guilty of fraud and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He also had to stand three times in the pillory and on these occasions, strangely enough, the crowd, so far from expressing their feelings in the usual form of bad eggs and street refuse, appeared sympathetic and got up a subscription for him ! His daughter, probably in consideration of her youth and the fact that she was simply a tool in her father's hands, seems to have escaped scot-free. She grew up, married twice, and lived until 1806, almost into Dickensian times. Mr. Kent's beloved sister-in-law, sad to say, received the posthumous and un-deserved nickname of " Scratching Fanny."

For nearly a century after the Cock Lane Ghost had been laid, the story remained popular and widely known. To-day, most Londoners would be hard put to it to narrate in detail the history of " Scratching Fanny," that history with which Dickens was so familiar. We have become used, though not resigned, to the sight of Dickens's London disappearing before the onslaughts of ruthless housebreakers ; but let us keep something, slight and intangible though it be, of the romance and wonder of a former day ! With all the Celtic and Dickensian eloquence at my command, I plead for the preservation of a ghost-story which Dickens knew and remembered !

TRANSATLANTIC ASTIGMATISM IN THE 'SIXTIES

BY FRANK FOSTER*

AMONG Victorian writers it was essential to many that a novel should have a definite purpose ; it must be " written round " some subject. Thus Charles Reade produced " It's Never Too Late to Mend," exposing the cruelty of penitentiary punishments ; " Hard Cash " showing the iniquity of private lunatic asylums. Some of us remember a novel, " Valentine Vox " on the latter subject : almost worthless as literature but popular as a book with a purpose.

Before he began *Martin Chuzzlewit* Dickens expressed his intention of delineating the evil effects of selfishness. He did excellently well ; the fine drawn comparison between the selfishness of Martin and that of Jonas is a high-water mark for the author in character analysis. But Dickens was to discover that the box office popularity of his books was his almost unique talent for story-telling and vivid portraiture. The sales of Chuzzlewit fell off alarmingly : something must be done. Dickens, like his great master Shakespeare, was a clever, conscious salesman. As definitely as Autolycus or Dr. Marigold, he sensed the necessity of a market to keep him going. America had not been " done " in fiction : not at least in a wholesale, tempestuous, tourist fashion.

* President of the Seattle Branch.

So Martin Chuzzlewit was packed off to America, to the consternation of those he left behind. America was little understood in the England of those days, though perhaps Mrs. Lupin's sentiment that Mark Tapley should have gone to some country, " not quite so barbarous, where the savages eat each other fairly and give an equal chance to everyone," contains some characteristic exaggeration. She probably had a hazy recollection of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday.

The author's success in England came near to being his undoing in America. He had ridiculed the faults and foibles of his own country so effectively, had made his rascals, tyrants, hypocrites, and bores so lifelike, that America welcomed him with open arms as the critic of a country they had never quite forgiven, for the United States school histories depicted her tyrannies and extortions. So when he turned the floodlight on Colonel Diver, Major Pawkins, Mrs. Hominy and Elijah Pogram, such of the people of America as had taken him at the foot of the letter felt that they had been shamefully betrayed. The fact that it was cruelty, extortion, hypocrisy, and boredom that he was satirizing and not the people of any particular country came as a surprise. However, there where two subjects on which Dickens was more emphatic than humorous. As neither existed in England his denunciations could be levied at the United States only. These were absence of a copyright law and negro slavery. To-day, all decent Americans, all except such political propagandists who could sell their souls for money if they could but find a buyer, agree that Dickens was right. But we should do no service to America, if we were to assume with G. K. Chesterton that Eden, Hannibal Chollop, and the " Water-toast Gazette " were " an allegorical pantomime : as much of a satire as Gulliver and nearly as much of a fairy tale." Chesterton knew almost nothing of America and felt all the more cocksure about it in consequence. In the middle eighties a stranger, wandering as far as a small river town on the Mississippi, would have found things but little changed from the days of Martin and Mark Tapley. Even the late President Theodore Roosevelt acknowledged the truth of Dickens's comments and portraits, but relieved his feelings by calling the author a " cad " ; an epithet which only made himself ridiculous, since he no more understood its meaning than the " Rev." Mr. Jardine when he applied it to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Whether it was Dickens's unconscious sense of fairness, or intentional, it is significant that the Anglo-Bengalee Corporation and the Eden Development Company are both featured in the same book. The latter was the cruder and crueller fraud, but, as James Truslow Adams points out, a people in the making cannot be judged by the same standards as an older and settled community.

The spectacular welcome given to Dickens on his second visit to America reveals how America really felt towards him. In the time that had elapsed each country had learned to understand the other better and it might be difficult to say even now how much of the kindly feeling that exists between us is due to Charles Dickens. The branch fellowships, no matter how small, may do much to keep it alive.

A PILGRIM IN CANTERBURY

By W. LAURENCE GADD

HE was tall, spare, and rather sallow, but with a twinkling eye and a genial countenance. He came from Boston, Mass., but I do not know his name: nor does he know mine.

I first saw him outside the 14th century gateway to Saint Augustine's Abbey, in Canterbury; standing, guide-book in hand, opposite to an old creeper-covered house in Lady Wootten's Green; and with such a comical expression of perplexity upon his puckered face, that I went across and asked him if I could be of any service.

"Well, now," he replied, "That is real kind of you. The guide-book tells me this is a house I wanted to see, but I can't fix it to my liking, anyhow. I reckon there ought to be a school here—a grave building in a court yard, with a learned air about it, well suited to the rooks and jackdaws that come down from the Cathedral towers to walk, with a clerkly bearing, upon the grass plot."

"I recognise the quotation," I said smilingly, "and I think I can remove your difficulty. The guide-book has misled you. Number one, Lady Wootten's Green, is a fine old house, but it is not the house of Doctor Strong. It is a pleasure to me to meet an admirer of Dickens, and I shall be very glad to show you the real house."

"Thank you," he replied. "Certainly I am an admirer of Charles D. This is my first visit to your Country, and I want to see all the places described in his books. It kind of makes the stories more real, if you see the actual scenes."

I quite agreed and suggested that we should walk on.

As we went along Broad Street, by the moat and the city wall built by the Romans some two thousand years ago, I asked my acquaintance if he had seen any other Dickens associations in Canterbury; and he said yes, he had seen the house of Agnes Wickfield, and the Inn where Micawber lodged; and had walked down North Lane, looking for Uriah

Heep's little home, but was not able to find it. He guessed it must have been pulled down. I told him I thought that three or four different cottages in North Lane had been identified as the house of Uriah Heep, none of them with any real justification, and that all of them were demolished some years ago. The house of Mr. Wickfield, in Saint Dunstan's Street, and the Sun Inn, in Palace Street, were authentic; but with regard to the former, the little round tower, in which Heep had his office, does not exist; and I suggested that Dickens had imported that particular feature from Eastgate House in Rochester.

"Hold hard," said my American friend, stopping and pulling out a note-book from his pocket, "I had not noticed that omission. I must make a note of it." Which he proceeded to do, and explained that he intended to visit Rochester, as the next objective on his pilgrimage.

Our way took us along Burgate Street (the Burgate itself was pulled down in 1781), in which we passed many old gabled houses with overhanging upper stories, some of them supported by finely carved oak corbels; and into the little square that used to be the Butter market. Here, my companion halted, as he caught sight of the Christchurch Gate, which had been recently cleaned, and the many escutcheons decorating its front, gilded and painted in their original colours. "Gee!" said he, "that is a mighty fine gateway. How old might that be, now?" "About four hundred and twenty years," I replied. "It was finished in the year 1517, and replaced an earlier Norman gateway on the same site. Originally," I continued, "it was flanked by octagonal towers, which were pulled down in the early part of last century, at the instance of some influential citizen, because they obstructed his view of the Cathedral clock, when he wanted to see the time. Happily they have just been restored, as you see, and the gateway now appears as it did when built. The middle ages were very primitive in many respects," I said, "but the old Monks knew how to build; and to design noble lines and beauty of decoration for their structures. Their primitive ideas of architecture did not run in the direction of square blocks, like soap-boxes, with a few slits in them for windows."

The American looked at me as if he thought I was quizzing him, but I assured him I was quite serious. "Well," he said, "I guess you are right. A modern building in *this* city would look entirely out of place; and durned ugly too." "Demnition ugly," I retorted, as we moved on.

In Palace Street, we passed the Sun Inn, which my companion had seen already; the church of Saint Alphege, in which Doctor Strong was married; and also an old house, with its door all askew, in which Sir John Boys lived until 1612; and presently came to the gateway of the Mint-yard, where my friend stopped to admire the massive oak gates, bound with wrought iron, which he reckoned might weigh about a ton each. I told him they dated, probably, from the early part of the seventeenth century. The oak doors of the Christchurch gateway are carved with the arms of Archbishop Juxon, who died in

1660, and the gates at the Mint-yard appeared to me to be earlier than those.

Passing through the portal, we came into the Mint-yard itself, with the buildings of the King's School before us. I explained to my friend that the best school in Canterbury, recommended by Mr. Wickfield, was undoubtedly the King's School; the oldest school in England, and the direct descendant of the monastic school founded by Sigberct in A.D. 631. It was moved from a building on the south side of the Cathedral to its present site in the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and then occupied the North Hall, which had been used, in the middle ages, as a dormitory or hostel for poor pilgrims.

"I hope I shall not cause you any disappointment," I said, "but these buildings are all modern. The North Hall and attached houses were destroyed by fire, and the present structures erected in 1865. Consequently, you do not see the actual building in which David Copperfield studied, although it is the same school on the same site."

"I am rather sorry to hear that," replied my friend, "but not much. This meets my idea of a grave building in a court-yard; and I see the Cathedral towers close by. I reckon it is the same yard that Dickens knew, anyway, and I speculate that the stone urns and the railings he saw went at the time of the fire." "I think so," I replied, "certainly there were stone urns and railings round the square, when Dickens described the place in 1849, and, probably, they disappeared at the rebuilding in 1865."

"And where did Doctor Strong live?" enquired the American.

"As you know" I replied, "his house was adjoining the school. from the windows of which could be seen a bit of the doctor's secluded garden, with peaches ripening on the sunny south wall. Also, you will remember that, on one occasion, David was called out of school and found Mr. Micawber waiting for him in the doctor's parlour. The old entrance to the school was by the Norman stair, so we will go that way."

Accordingly we went through the arches leading to the Green Court, and, turning to the left, stood before the wonderfully preserved Norman staircase, which my friend contemplated for a time in silence. "How old?" he asked laconically. "Just over eight hundred years," I replied, and left it at that.

We mounted the staircase and entered the school. Passing through two or three classrooms of moderate size, with their blackboards and rows of desks, and along a passageway, we descended a flight of stairs and found ourselves in the house on the south side of the school buildings. I was not able to indicate which room was Doctor Strong's parlour, but we thought it might have been the pleasant ground-floor apartment with a bay window overlooking a smallish but secluded garden on the west side of the Green Court.

For some little time, we slowly walked up and down this garden, almost in the shadow of the Cathedral towers, and within hearing of the rooks circling about them, each of us occupied with his own thoughts. Presently, my companion remarked "I have been thinking that David Copperfield, when he left the school, had this house and little garden

(*Continued at foot of next page*)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL OF TO-MORROW

By J. H. McNULTY

OLD London was dead: to begin with.

It had completely passed away, and was forgotten, and a new London had taken its place. To say that old London was as dead as ancient Rome would be an under-statement, for much of old Rome remained, though in ruins, but the London of the past, like the vanished years, had disappeared and left no trace behind.

Everyone knew it, and no one regretted it, except some curious persons of antiquarian tastes, and who paid any regard to them? Small plaques had been placed on buildings occupying the sites of houses where great men had lived or died, and what reasonable person could want more than that?

The new city was the most up-to-date, modern, and best equipped in the world; mechanised to the smallest detail; a model to all other cities. High buildings made the most of the precious space occupied by the Metropolis, where land was literally worth its weight in gold. The streets were brilliantly lighted, night and day, with artificial sunshine, and almost complete weather control had been established. A very skilfully devised method of warming or cooling the air preserved an even temperature day and night throughout the year, and fog, frost, and snow were practically unknown. It was the boast of the authorities that London was the one place where you could be safe from the extremes of winter or summer.

This made it all the more disappointing when, in the latter part of December in the year 2001, heavy rain followed by fog and intense frost brought back all the old discomforts in an exaggerated form. By the 24th of the month, things had reached a climax. Ice-coated roads which defied the salt thrown upon them, added to the fog, made travelling slow and dangerous. On this day, Sir Robert Scrooge-Cratchit, Managing Director of Marley's Discount & Mortgage Company, arrived in the city in the worst of tempers. His train was late, he failed to find a taxi at the station and had been forced to walk through the ice-bound foggy streets to the office, and once there, was ready to blame all who, like himself, were also late.

(*Continued from page* 17)

strongly in his mind, with a vague sense of impending calamity and disgrace hanging over them like a shadow." "Yes," I replied, "but afterwards, at Highgate, Mr. Dick had a bright idea and was the means of removing the unfounded suspicions fostered by Heep, and proving the innocence of the old doctor's wife."

"That is so," rejoined my friend, "and is a brighter thought with which to leave the old garden."

We came out into the Green Court by the private gate, and stood for a few moments, to gaze upon the stately pile of the Cathedral, surmounted by the great Bell Harry or Angel Steeple, and all aglow with the golden glory of the setting sun.

A keen business man was Sir Robert—rather more Scrooge than Cratchit—and a great grandson of the famous Bob Cratchit, the founder of the family. Scrooge was a favourite name among Bob's descendants, and Sir Robert not only bore the name but possessed much of the old merchant's business acumen. His knighthood had been given him in recognition of his great financial abilities which had made Marley's Discount Company the powerful concern it was.

A heavy post awaited him this morning, for to-morrow was the weekly Rest Day which happened this week to fall on the 25th of the month. Few cared to remember it as Christmas Day. He spent the morning signing letters, arranging loans and grumbling at all the members of the staff who approached him, and then to his and everyone's annoyance, and to increase, if that were possible, his ill temper, the electric light failed. The failure may have been due to some unexplained action of the freakish weather—always blame the weather in the absence of any other culprit !

A hasty search for candles followed, and resulted in the procuring of a supply from an old-fashioned Ecclesiastical Furnishers near by. In this dim but by no means religious light the day's work proceeded, and this curious light brought back to Sir Robert's mind the story he had often heard in his childhood. It had been told to him as a boy by his grandfather, who had it from his father, the original Bob Cratchit. He had not given it a thought for many a long day, but now it returned as a half-forgotten memory—a ghost that would not be laid, a most unwelcome *revenant.* The fog, the cold, the dim light, things reminiscent of a distant and barbarous age, gave him the feeling that all this had been before, and the feeling was intensified when two portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, arrived at the office, and requested an interview. They were shown in.

" Sir Robert Scrooge-Cratchit, I believe " said the first gentleman. " We have come to ask for a donation to our Funds. At this season of the year, Sir Robert, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some extra provision for the poor."

" Are there no pris —— no union work —— no, I mean," he corrected himself, " is there no dole, no Public Relief ? " (What was the matter with him, he was using the very words of the old story).

" Doesn't the State look after these people you speak of ? We have to pay enough in rates and taxes to provide food and clothing for all."

" Yes, indeed " replied the gentleman, " actual starvation is prevented, but believe me, the allowance is small, pitiably small. The firm of Scrooge & Marley was well known for its generosity in the past."

" Exactly,' said Sir Robert, ' you are right—in the past, but we live in the present. Good afternoon, gentlemen, good afternoon."

" I suppose, to make it perfect, my fool of a nephew ought to call on me now to wish me a Merry Christmas, but really to try to get a gift out of me. Well, he won't get anything, that's all about it."

A little later his private telephone, which was reserved for important and personal calls, rang. He picked up the receiver, and as he did so

the electric light suddenly sprang into life and fell again as if to say "I know him."

"Jacob Marley speaking," came a distant voice.

"What do you want? What is your business?"

"The common welfare should be *your* business. Charity, mercy, forbearance, benevolence, should be *your* business. You will be haunted by three Spirits ——"

Sir Robert slammed down the receiver. "This is madness, mid-summer madness" he cried, "and in mid-winter too."

He resumed the examination of the documents on his desk.

Again the telephone rang. He hesitated before he answered and then "this is Marley's Discount Company," he said. A faint voice gradually growing stronger replied "I am the ghost of Christmas Past."

"Long past?" he enquired, and could have bitten out his tongue with vexation. Why did he say that? He knew; they were the words of the story again.

"No, *your* past," came the voice.

Once more he rang off, and resumed his work. But he was not to remain undisturbed. His bell rang again. He paused. Should he call a clerk? It might be important. What should he do? No, this was weakness; the thing was nonsense, a practical joke, imagination; and to hesitate was to give it an importance, a reality, it did not possess.

He lifted the receiver. A loud cheerful voice cried, "Is that Marley's Discount Company?"

"Speaking," said Sir Robert.

"I have some pressing business with you. My representatives called on you this afternoon to ask for a donation. I am the ghost of Christmas Present."

He hurriedly replaced the receiver, took a couple of turns round the room, walked through the office, lighted a cigar and returned to his desk. Half an hour of silence followed, and then once more the bell rang.

No, he would not answer it this time. He rang for his secretary. No one came. Again he rang. No one appeared. The 'phone continued ringing. Unable to bear it any longer, he lifted with trembling hands the receiver and listened.—— Not a sound. "Sir Robert Cratchit speaking." No answer. "Who's there?" Silence. He called the exchange, but got no reply. He replaced the receiver and instantly the bell rang again.

"Who and what are you?" he cried, picking up the receiver once more.—— Silence complete and profound. Then he remembered. The Last of the Spirits, "the solemn Phantom draped and hooded" did not speak. The Future is silent—a blank.

"This is horrible" he cried. "What shall I do? Answer me." Not a sound, not a word.

He waited, how long he did not know, and then suddenly there was a blaze of light. He opened his eyes. The electric light was on again, and a messenger at the door was asking, "Did you ring, Sir? Is there anything further to-night?"

" Yes—no—I've been asleep—what's the time ? Has everyone gone ? What day is it ? Christmas Eve, isn't it ? "

" Yes, Sir."

" Have they all gone home ? "

" No, Sir, the messengers are still here."

" Then divide this among them." He took some notes out of his pocket. " A Christmas box. A good old custom ; we must revive it. A Merry Christmas to you all, a Merry Christmas."

He went out into the street, sent off several telegrams, bought a quantity of holly, then calling a taxi, he placed all the green stuff in it, and gave the driver his home address. He wasn't going to take all that holly into the train ; there was room in the taxi, but not too much. The fog had cleared, but frost glittered everywhere like stars shining in unexpected places.

Looking like something between a City Magnate and the ancient figure of Jack-in-the-Green, he arrived home.

" My dear, what have you brought all that stuff for ? " asked Lady Cratchit.

" Christmas decorations, of course."

" But it will make all the walls so dirty," she said.

" Damn the walls ! I mean, what does it matter if it does ? Better a dirty wall than a dull Christmas. Besides, it's very clean holly ; and I've asked my brothers and their families to come to-morrow. We'll have a real Christmas party."

" My dear Robert, you must be dreaming."

" No, I'm not. I was, at business this afternoon though. I had a strange dream, and I want the rest of it to come true. You've heard the family story, of course. Old grandfather Bob used to tell it. Well, it happened again this afternoon ; not quite the same but near enough, and now I'm going to arrange the other part. I gave some Christmas boxes before I left the office to-night. What do you think of that ? "

" They'll think you're mad, Robert."

" Well, let them. It's a form of madness they'll like, and now I'm going to have a real Christmas feast. My name is Scrooge-Cratchit, and so is yours, my dear, so we ought to know how to keep Christmas. If we don't, who should ? "

" Well, I'm quite willing, but you know, Robert, if you eat all that rich Christmas fare, you'll have terrible indigestion."

" Then, my dear, I'll be a martyr in a good cause. How do you make punch ? "

" My dear, you mustn't. It will upset you horribly. You've been a teetotaller for the last twenty years."

" Then it's high time I took a little drink. I deserve it. Absinthe, or is it absence, makes the heart grow fonder, but I will be careful. Remember, we're both Scrooge-Cratchits. Let us live up to our names. But I want to have it all right, so just to make sure, I'll read the Carol again :

" Marley was dead : to begin with——"

Drawn by] [*Edward F. Payne*

I am in the theatrical profession myself, my wife is in the theatrical profession, my children are in the theatrical profession. I had a dog that lived and died in it from a puppy ; and my chaise pony goes on, in "Timour the Tartar." I'll bring you out, and your friend too. Say the word. I want a novelty. There's genteel comedy in your walk and manner, juvenile tragedy in your eye, and touch-and-go farce in your laugh. You'll do as well as if you had thought of nothing else but the lamps, from your birth downwards.

* * * * *

Many and many is the circuit this pony has gone. He is quite one of us. His mother was on the stage. She ate apple-pie at a circus for upwards of fourteen years, fired pistols, and went to bed in a night-cap ; and in short, took the low comedy entirely. His father was a dancer.

* * * * *

He was a rather low sort of pony. The fact is, he had been originally jobbed out by the day, and he never quite got over his old habits. He was clever in melodrama too, but too broad—too broad. When the mother died, he took the port-wine business—drinking port-wine with the clown ; but he was greedy, and one night bit off the bowl of the glass and choked himself, so his vulgarity was the death of him at last.

* * * * *

My daughter—my daughter, the idol of every place we go into, sir. We have had complimentary letters about this girl, sir, from the nobility and gentry of almost every town in England. I'll tell you what, sir, the talent of this child is not to be imagined. She must be seen, sir—seen—to be ever so faintly appreciated.

* * * * *

The 'Blood Drinker' will die with that girl ; and she's the only sylph *I* ever saw, who could stand upon one leg, and play the tambourine on her other knee, *like* a sylph.

* * * * *

You don't quite know what Mrs. Crummles is, yet, you don't indeed. *I* don't, and that's a fact. I don't think her country will, till she is dead. Some new proof of talent bursts from that astonishing woman every year of her life. I pledge you my professional word I didn't even know she could dance, till her last benefit, and then she played Juliet, and Helen Macgregor, and did the skipping-rope hornpipe between the pieces. The very first time I saw that admirable woman, she stood upon her head on the butt-end of a spear, surrounded with blazing fireworks.

STIPENDIARY GIRLS AND SPINSTERS

By MARY L. PENDERED

I.

I HAVE come to the conclusion that one can estimate the quality of a novelist by his treatment of the minor characters. The inferior writer expends all his care on creating major parts in his drama and keeps all the rest as supers. The man of genius, on the other hand, takes as much trouble to individualise the minor parts as he does the important ones. Indeed, very often those important parts are apt to be overdrawn and therefore less real than the unimportant ones. The good folk are inclined to be a little too good ; the bad a little too bad ; the comic a little too comic. One may reasonably doubt, for instance, the absolute perfections of an Agnes Wickfield ; the positive meekness and sweetness of a little Emily ; the equally positive silliness of a Dora ; the devilish wickedness of a Quilp, a Uriah Heep, or a Fledgeby ; but who can doubt the authenticity of a Barkis, a Snagsby, a Traddles, a Billickin, or a Crupp ?

It is, I submit, one of Dickens's claims to greatness that he draws even the most minor characters in his fiction so that they have the very breath of life in them and, not only that, but distinct personalities of their own.

Let us consider, first of all, his treatment of the class called by Mrs. Wilfer—that majestic lady who wore gloves in the house and never used a short word when she could think of a long one—" stipendiary girls ; " the domestic servant, of whom there are a good many sprinkled among his books. They are, one feels, pretty accurate portraits of the maid servants of their day ; especially those employed by the lower middle-classes. I will class them in groups and take first those who are the aristocrats of their class and maintain a certain independence of spirit, due, no doubt, to having something behind them, a home or family ; such is Peggotty. Although a " stipendiary " she is obviously not a " slavey " like poor little Marchioness or Guster. Nor is, I think, Susan Nipper, nor Miss Miggs. Nor that Janet who wrestled with donkeys for Miss Trotwood and accompanied her to London. One may be pretty sure that all of these young women had good wages, as wages were in those days, and kept a self-respecting poise. We know that Peggotty did, and she was one of Dickens's most loyal-hearted women, sticking to the Murdstone family so long as she could be of any use to the little boy she loved so much. And we know that she was more of a friend than a servant to Clara Copperfield.

I would rank Miss Miggs with that Phoebe who was " stipendiary " to Fanny Squeers, because they were both sufficiently astute to maintain some power over their unpleasant mistresses by the skilled use of flattery. Of the two, Miss Miggs is the more subtle since she pretends to consider her master's feelings. When Mrs. Varden says that she is far too unwell to go out, Miggs exclaims : " Oh no, you're not, mim. The hair and motion of the shay will do you good, mim, and you mustn't give way, you must not raly. She must keep up, sir, mustn't she, for

all our sakes." (Note the subtlety of that.)—" Oh I never see such a blessed one as she is for forgiveness of her spirit. I never, never, never did. Nor more did Master—no, nor no one, never ! "

She could lay on the butter thick enough, but not thicker than Phoebe, who curled Fanny Squeers's hair and performed other little offices of her toilet. We do not hear very much of the Squeers's " stipendiary " but she is described as " a small servant-girl with a hungry eye " and we meet her now and again in their charming (?) establishment, always as " the hungry servant," so we may conclude she was not much better off than the Marchioness and Guster. Here is a sample of her skill :

" How lovely your hair do curl to-night, miss. I declare if it isn't a pity and a shame to brush it out," she says. And when Fanny tells her to hold her tongue she starts on a still wilier attack : " Well, I couldn't help saying, miss, not if you was to kill me for it, that I never see nobody look so vulgar as Miss Price this night."

Not being quenched and seeing she was on the right trail, Phoebe continues : " I know it's very wrong of me to say so, miss—Miss Price being a friend of yours and all, but she do dress herself out so, and go on in such a manner to get noticed, that—oh—well, if people only saw themselves ! " Soaring to the full height of Machiavellian diplomacy, she finishes by suggesting that Mr. Browdie would be glad to be off with Miss Price and on with Miss Squeers. Could anything be better calculated to heal the blow Nicholas had given to Fanny's pride ? Hats off to Phoebe ! Dickens says that Fanny was not deceived by this " sheer, coarse, lying flattery ; " but he admits that it soothed and softened her.

I need not describe the lot of the Marchioness, the poor little slavey to Sally Brass, who won the compassion and finally the affection of Dick Swiveller. Through him she has become a classic and plays almost a major part in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. But Guster, stipendiary to the Snagsbys, was less fortunate. There came no Perseus to her Andromeda to rescue her from the dragon, though towards the end of *Bleak House*, there is a suggestion that the dragon softens a little.

Guster (by some supposed to have been christened Augusta) we are told, was " possessed only of that name, fifty shillings a year and a very small box indifferently filled with clothing." She was " farmed out from a workhouse and had fits, which the parish couldn't account for." That is not all we know of Guster however. We find that she is warm hearted and her last fit is caused by doing a kindness and being found out by her mistress who " came behind her from somewhere and laid hold of her." She is sorry for poor Jo and gives him her own supper of bread and cheese, while warding off a fit. We may be pretty sure she was hungry herself too.

Tilly Slowboy is another soft-hearted " stipendiary." She was a foundling and it is doubtful whether she was paid so much as fifty shillings per annum since the Peerybingles were not very well off. But she was lucky in being farmed out to such a kind mistress as Dot who even forgave her " rare and surprising talent for getting the baby into

difficulties." This young lady, according to her chronicler, " was of a spare, straight shape, insomuch that her garments appeared to be in constant danger of sliding off those sharp pegs, the shoulders, on which they were loosely hung. Her costume was remarkable for the partial development of some flannel vestment of a singular structure; also for affording glimpses, in the region of the back, of a corset or pair of stays in colour a dead green."

I should not like to urge that Tilly Slowboy was brainy, even as brainy at Phoebe, but that she was not unobservant may be seen from a speech of hers to the baby. " Did its mother make it up a beds then . . . and did its hair grow brown and curly when its caps was lifted off, and frighten it, a precious pets a-sitting by the fires."

Whatever her mental process, Tilly was certainly soft-hearted in a high degree and when she saw her little mistress in deep distress, gave vent to her sympathy in howls and ejaculations in her own peculiar phraseology:

" Ow! if you please don't. It's bad enough to dead and bury the Baby so it is . . . if you please, don't. Ow ! what has everybody been and gone and done with everybody, making everybody else so wretched."

I will not dwell upon the " stipendiary " Hortense, who was Lady Deadlock's maid and took off her shoes to walk through the wet grass in order to demonstrate that she was " mortal high and passionate." She and Rosa Dartle and, I believe, Tattycoram were victims of that jealous passion which sticks at nothing; and she was, I think, the most credible of the three. One cannot take Rosa Dartle as authentic womanhood; she is one of Dickens's grossly over-coloured creations. Hortense is real; Rosa is almost grotesque in her unreality and resembles one of the Vices in a Morality play, typifying jealous rage and hatred. With due deference to our esteemed author, I think he lost his head over Rosa Dartle and in her we see him at his worst. But she was not a " stipendiary." She was one of the spinsters I am now about to deal with. There were other " stipendiaries " here and there cropping up in the novels, such as the one who waited on Miss La Creevy and described herself as " an Orfling; " and a series that afflicted poor David Copperfield and tyrannised over Dora, led by one Mary Anne Paragon who had a written character as large as a proclamation and according to it " could do everything of a domestic nature I had ever heard of and a great many things I had never heard of." She was warranted sober and honest; but was found under the boiler in a fit, and disappearing teaspoons were laid to the dustman's charge. But Mary Anne's reign was soon over and so was Dickens's harsh criticism of stipendiary aids, with whom he usually shows great sympathy. Indeed, in Dora's long list of domestic failures he suggests that she was often the supreme cause of their defections.

II.

In considering Dickens's spinsters we have to remember that in his day a woman was on the shelf and an old maid at thirty. She usually

began to wear a cap at that age to show that she gave up all ridiculous pretensions to youth. Girls pitied her, poor thing, and in their prayers at night begged to be spared her awful fate. But Dickens certainly did not share this point of view. His old maids are generally extremely content and jolly. One discounts, of course, those who are, like Rosa Dartle, crossed in love, but the others live in single blessedness quite happily and among them we may perhaps count Betsey Trotwood who, although she had been married, took to the life of a spinster again and became one to all intents and purposes.

But there is a long list of real spinsters, too long to chronicle more than a selection here. There is Miss Twinkleton who had charge of Rosa Bud and who has two different states of being. Every night, the moment the young ladies had retired to rest, we hear that Miss Twinkleton " smartens up her curls, brightens up her eyes a little and becomes a sprightlier Miss Twinkleton than the girls have ever seen." She was no soured or dismal old maid. It would be, I think easy to prove that, in Dickens's view, spinsters on the whole, were happier than married women. Who could lead a more cheery existence than Miss La Creevy, before she was wooed and won by Tim Linkinwater; to Mrs. Nickleby's deep disgust, who was far more eager than any spinster for the love of man—any man, even a lunatic ! And Sally Brass had what she valued more than any man's love—power. She ruled her brother with a rod of iron, and, I feel sure, enjoyed life vastly.

So did, no doubt, the odious Miss Murdstone who managed to keep such a hold over her equally odious brother that he seemed unable to live without her. They lived what a friend of mine used to call " a monkey and parrot life " and each tormented the other as much as they tormented their victims; but Miss Murdstone was obviously " top dog " in their *ménage* and there is no doubt she enjoyed herself.

Charity Pecksniff is an unpleasant spinster, a victim, like Hortense to jealousy; but she had reason to thank her lucky stars for an escape from Jonas; and probably did so.

Miss Rachel Wardle is another lady who needs no compassion from us. She had the experience of two exciting love affairs and an elopement —all the fun, in fact, without the aftermath of regret which must have been hers had she not been rescued from the adventurous rascal, Jingle. She had certainly reason to congratulate herself and, having money of her own, was not one of those pathetic spinsters who have to live out their lives in subordinate positions in other folks' houses, as spinsters so often had to do when there was no other profession open to them but that of governess.

Miss Havisham is more to be pitied because she suffered from the type of mind that broods over its wrongs till it goes flabby. She had no great reason to complain of her lot before she was jilted (and in that she, too, might well have congratulated herself) for she had a fortune and a house; she had not to seek a precarious living, with the workhouse before her as a final abode. But we cannot quite believe in Miss Havisham as a real woman and I am quite sure her wedding garments

would not have lasted so long ! She is such a preposterous fool and play-actress that one can feel little sympathy with her sorrows. But what magic she wields ! Who can ever forget that aged bride sitting amidst the mouldering remains of her wedding feast while the spiders spin webs over her bride-cake, cursing her fate and the whole race of man ?

Ghastly, haunting, she is surely an immortal figure ; even if she is as unreal as the hooded deaths-head with the scythe. I read *Great Expectations* at an early age and all I remembered of it, until I read the book again much later, was that unearthly figure. Surely a masterly conception of the imagination.

Among the less-known spinsters, indeed quite a minor figure, is Miss Potterson, sole proprietor and manager of " The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters " who, we read, " reigned supreme on her throne the Bar, and a man must have drunk himself mad drunk indeed if he thought he could contest a point with her. As she called herself Miss Abbey Potterson, some of the waterside heads, none of the clearest, thought she bore some relation to the Abbey at Westminster but this was not so. She had been christened Abigail some sixty years before." She comes nearest in character, I think, to Betsey Trotwood, and is if possible even more dignified.

Miss Potterson, like Betsey Trotwood, had her heart in the right place and she had a very tender spot in it for Lizzie Hexam. When she had forbidden Lizzie's father to come to her bar—" a bar," we are told " to soften the human breast "—a triumph of snugness and comfort—she was so inwardly perturbed that she could eat no supper and drink only half her usual tumbler of hot Port Negus. If Dickens had drawn but this one spinster, we should have known that he did not hold the common view of the unmarried woman as a thwarted and unhappy being. Between her and Miss Havisham lies a great gulf ; but their author doubtless knew that one was but a ghost, the figment of a vivid fancy and the other was a live human woman.

We must not fail to recall Miss Flite, or the two gentle ladies who gave a home to Dora when her father died. Of Miss Flite we learn that she was a " little mad old woman in a squeezed bonnet, who is always in court from its sitting to its rising and always expecting some incomprehensible judgement to be given in her favour ; " and the Misses Clarissa and Lavinia Spenlow are described as " two dry little elderly ladies dressed in black and each looking wonderfully like a preparation in chip or lace, of the late Mr. Spenlow. . . They were dressed alike but the younger sister wore her dress with a more youthful air than the other (she was six years younger) and perhaps had a trifle more frill, or tucker, or brooch, or bracelet, or some little thing of the kind, which made her look more lively. . . . They were both upright in their carriage, formal, precise, composed and quiet. One of them had her arms crossed on her breast and resting in each other like an Idol."

Cannot you see the dear, prim things ? They both had, says their author, " little bright round twinkling eyes which were like birds' eyes and they were not unlike birds altogether, having a sharp, brisk, sudden

manner and a little short, spruce way of adjusting themselves, like canaries."

Is it not inimitable ? Here are two of the most minor characters in the book, but they are not supers. They are personalities, as sharply depicted as David and Dora and, although alike, are clearly different.

It has been, of course, impossible to bring together all the Dickens spinsters within these few pages, but there is one glorious creation that should not be omitted—Miss Knag, the consequential forewoman of Madam Mantalini's milinery establishment. She is described as " a short, bustling, over-dressed female, full of importance. She flatters Madame as grossly as Phoebe flatters Fanny Squeers and Madame is not above pandering to her jealous vanity. She knows her Knag and speaks so disparagingly of Kate Nickleby to her that Miss Knag takes the despised assistant to her bosom and declares that she loves her like a sister. She observes that she and Kate make a very good pair, except that she is darker and has smaller feet." " And I am sure Miss Nickleby will not be offended at my saying that," she adds. " When I tell her our family always have been celebrated for small feet since—hem—our family have had any feet at all." Whereupon she proceeds to describe her uncle, a tobacconist at Cheltenham, who " had feet no bigger than those usually joined to wooden legs."

As a conversationalist Miss Knag runs Mrs. Nickleby very closely and one of the best bits of comedy Dickens ever wrote is where he describes the dialogue between these two garrulous ladies on their walk through the streets to Miss Knag's house. Mrs. Nickleby gets first innings and gives one of her rambling stories ; but when she pauses for breath Miss Knag seizes the opportunity with a detailed account of her mother " a lovely, beautiful creature with the most exquisite nose that ever was put on a human face," whose only failing was that of too generously lending money. This is followed by a full tide of reminiscence which Mrs. Nickleby tries in vain to stem, and finally both ladies talk at once " the only difference between them being that whereas Miss Knag addressed herself to Kate and talked very loud, Mrs. Nickleby kept on in one gentle, unbroken flow, perfectly satisfied to be talking and caring very little whether anybody listened or not."

The highly imaginative account given by Miss Knag of her brother's romantic passion for Madame Mantalini and how he " very naturally took to scorning everybody and became a genius " is full of the essential Dickens humour, with its unsurpassed flavour of irony ; while the picture he gives of the Knag household—the importunate charwoman ; the supper of cold mutton, bread and cheese, brandy and water ; the library kept by Mortimer Knag, is drawn as vividly as any to be found in his pages. And Miss Knag stands out no less vividly as the capable spinster who, while able to hold her own in a society made by men for the benefit of men, as it seemed in her day, has yet a vulnerable spot in her essential feminine vanity and desire to be first. She falls to pieces at the first sign of another, and a younger woman, being preferred to her. And, funny as her paroxysm of rage appears, it is natural enough. Miss Knag is no lay figure.

DICKENS'S LETTERS*

By J. W. T. LEY

I AM a very long way indeed from being a mathematician, but contemplation of these three volumes had led me to attempt a calculation. My set of Dickens's published writings consists of 24 volumes. They represent the work of 34 years. I calculate that they average approximately 250,000 words per volume. *Oliver Twist* contains roughly 200,000 words; other books such as *David Copperfield* and *Little Dorrit* run to about twice that length, so I think we may average the 24 volumes at a quarter of a million words. That means that in those 34 years Dickens wrote and published six million words, at an average of 160,000 words per annum. It is important to remember that all this work was of first-class quality. I say *all* advisedly, of course. No doubt, some of the articles which appear in *Miscellaneous Papers* would never have been preserved but for the fact that they were his work; but it is a fair proposition that those 24 volumes constitute as a whole a contribution to our literature of lasting value. Fourteen of them contain full-length novels that no judge believes will die: another contains five *Christmas Stories*, three at least of which are to live. Another contains a collection of short stories which embraces such "throw-offs" as *Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings*, *The Holly Tree Inn*, etc. No, the most perversely cynical individual cannot suggest pot-boiling.

But what else was he doing in those years? I do not know how many letters are contained in the three volumes under notice, but I do know that they run in all to about a million and a quarter words. Then, it is known positively that there are innumerable letters in existence that have never been published. Therefore we may reasonably put Dickens's epistolary output at 1,750,000 words, over a period of 38 years—20,000 words per annum roughly.

Of course, not all of the letters have literary value. Ever so many have not. Ever so many are mere notes; on the other hand, some run to a thousand words and more, and contain passages of truest Dickensian quality. How was it done! Think of the mere physical labour. There were no typewriters in his time. Every word of every letter and of every book save one was penned with his own hand. And in the first decade or two his implement was a quill pen, and his artificial illumination was candle light!

But this is not all by a very long way. During the earliest part of the period that these letters cover he was a newspaper reporter, during the Parliamentary Session working half through the night in the gallery, and out of the session travelling about the country for his paper. During the last twenty years of the period he edited first *Household Words* and then *All the Year Round*—and he was editor, *in fact*, reading every manuscript and every proof. During the last

* "The Letters of Charles Dickens." In three vols. Edited by Walter Dexter. Published in the Nonesuch Dickens by the Nonesuch Press, London. 55 guineas, set of twenty-three vols.

twelve years of the period he was travelling up and down the country and in America on his reading tours. He was in demand as a public speaker—his recorded speeches make a substantial volume. He organised—was producer, manager, and principal actor—the most ambitious series of amateur theatricals on record. For years he was almoner to Miss Coutts. He travelled much in Europe.

It seems as if he must have been at white heat incessantly: yet he lived a full social life. All through these volumes are references to social gatherings. He was a family man, too, and his children have testified that for all his activities they never lacked a father's loving care.

Now let us note that from the date at which the first of these volumes opens—1820—he was never free from domestic worries. All through the first twenty years at least his father was a constant burden, and when that ended the skeleton in his cupboard at home was rattling its bones almost to his distraction without cessation year after year. And, then, when at last that was disposed of, the foul breath of scandal was made to stink in his nostrils. Are we to wonder that he died worn out at an age when his powers should hardly have begun to weaken?

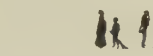
These were the thoughts that compelled me as I handled this fine edition of the letters of Charles Dickens, and I think they are worth putting on paper. Then came another thought—much more important, but expressible in much less space. At every turn the ghouls are thwarted. They waited long, and when Dickens's last child died they smacked their lips in anticipation of the garbage that they were so sure would soon be thrown to them. And they hunger yet. Only Thomas Wright offered them any sort of food and that wholly lacked nourishment. His childish story, based on nothing, is already forgotten. In the last dozen years hundreds of Dickens's letters have come to light. Never has one sentence been discovered which could be used to lend the slightest colour to any of the whispered scurrilities. There has been no suppression. Let that be said emphatically. In the task of editing so many thousands of letters, Mr. Dexter has never had cause to hesitate. Nothing whatsoever has yet come to light to give these people countenance. More knowledge of Dickens's life has been obtained in the last fifteen years than in the previous fifty, and not one fact has been revealed to give the slightest cause for reassessing his character.

Here are thousands of his letters. There is no evidence that one of them was written with thoughts of ultimate publication; it is perfectly obvious that no such idea lay behind ninety-nine out of any hundred. The man is here. I do not suppose any popular genius can write a letter to anybody wholly unselfconsciously, but that is not the same thing as writing with thoughts of the printer continually in mind. These letters are as genuinely an expression of their writer's true self as any letters ever were. And that true self is essentially good. Turn over page after page and you will find evidence of his ever-readiness to serve his fellow men. I do not refer to theatricals in

aid of Leigh Hunt and John Poole and the Jerrold family. I mean that continually we have evidence of little unremembered acts of kindness and of love, sometimes to a friend, sometimes to obscure strangers. The evidence is here that Charles Dickens was a staunchly loyal friend; a lovingly devoted father; a good self-sacrificing son and brother—yes, and a good husband, too. I write all this deliberately.

The publishers and Mr. Dexter have done a good service. Mr. Dexter's task must have been terrific, but he has completed it well. His annotations are good and useful; he has not fallen into the temptation to over-annotate. And the index is what it ought to be in such a work—thorough. The publishers have proved worthy of themselves. The Nonesuch Dickens is a joy.

But, these letters must, by and by, be made available to the ordinary man in the street. They are too valuable to be kept for the select few. They are a vitally important addition to our knowledge of the life of Charles Dickens, and the world at large must have them as soon as possible.



FRENCH RECEPTION OF *THE PICKWICK PAPERS* IN 1838

The "Journal des Debats" reprinted in October the following biting criticism of *The Pickwick Papers* which had appeared in that paper one hundred years ago.

"The work of Mr. Dickens deals with ridiculous natives who have not yet crossed the borders of Great Britian, and whose merit can only be understood by an inhabitant of the neighbourhood of St. Paul's.

"The word Pickwick, for example, is a more or less pleasing nickname formed from the verb pick and the noun wick, as in lamp-wick.

"Doubtless in the mind of the author, the Pickwickians are zealous collectors of little lights, of scattered observations, of curious details. Sport is a game, an amusement, a farce.

"We shall doubtless be forgiven; courage fails us to follow the author through an ocean of popular expressions, street proverbs, abbreviations, barbarisms, slang, and parodies.

"The style of M. Paul de Kock is a model of elegance if you compare it with the style of Mr. Dickens.

"What is most curious in this book that has just had a tremendous success in London, is the exact portrayal of certain trivial customs. No one in England has as yet dared to descend as low as Mr. Charles Dickens."

The explanation is that the translation—admitted on the title page as made "freely"—was a very imperfect one, much of the story being omitted entirely, and other parts being added to it in a most fantastic manner. The new translation, twenty years later, was made under Dickens's own direction.

A New German Edition of Dickens, with the original illustrations, is announced for publication in ten volumes by Insel-Verlag, in Leipzig.

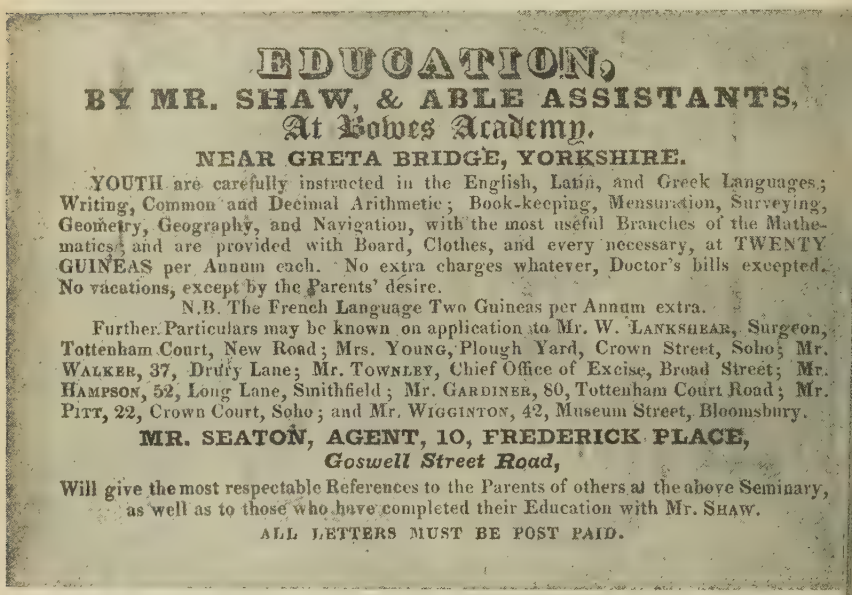
TREASURES AT THE DICKENS HOUSE

EDUCATION AT SHAW'S ACADEMY, BOWES

By S. J. RUST

NOW that a century has elapsed since Dickens, accompanied by "Phiz," visited Bowes in order to study at first hand the "Yorkshire" schools, it is to be hoped that we can calmly and dispassionately consider how far the description of Dotheboys Hall was justified by fact.

There can be no doubt that Bowes Academy, the establishment of



EDUCATION,
BY MR. SHAW, & ABLE ASSISTANTS,
At Bowes Academy,
NEAR GRETA BRIDGE, YORKSHIRE.

YOUTH are carefully instructed in the English, Latin, and Greek Languages; Writing, Common and Decimal Arithmetic; Book-keeping, Mensuration, Surveying, Geometry, Geography, and Navigation, with the most useful Branches of the Mathematics; and are provided with Board, Clothes, and every necessary, at TWENTY GUINEAS per Annum each. No extra charges whatever, Doctor's bills excepted. No vacations, except by the Parents' desire.

N.B. The French Language Two Guineas per Annum extra.

Further Particulars may be known on application to Mr. W. Lankshear, Surgeon, Tottenham Court, New Road; Mrs. Young, Plough Yard, Crown Street, Soho; Mr. Walker, 37, Drury Lane; Mr. Townley, Chief Office of Excise, Broad Street; Mr. Hampson, 52, Long Lane, Smithfield; Mr. Gardiner, 80, Tottenham Court Road; Mr. Pitt, 22, Crown Court, Soho; and Mr. Wigginton, 42, Museum Street, Bloomsbury.

MR. SEATON, AGENT, 10, FREDERICK PLACE,
Goswell Street Road,

Will give the most respectable References to the Parents of others at the above Seminary, as well as to those who have completed their Education with Mr. Shaw.

ALL LETTERS MUST BE POST PAID.

William Shaw, was the prototype of Squeers' school, for Dickens made an entry in his note-book under the date of February 2nd, 1838, which reads:

> "Shaw, the schoolmaster we saw to-day, is the man in whose school several boys went blind sometime since from gross neglect. The case was tried and the verdict went against him. It must have been between 1823 and 1826. Look this up in the newspapers."

This case was reviewed in some detail by John Suddaby in *The Dickensian* of October, 1915 (Vol. XI, p. 260) and it is not my intention to go into that trial here except to point out that the chief boy witness, William Jones, who had gone blind, was a few days older than Charles Dickens; for on October 30th, 1823, he stated that he would be twelve years of age in the succeeding January.

We can readily realise how the indignation of the boy Dickens must have been roused as he heard his father read out allegations of the treatment meted out to a boy of his own age. To such a boy the evidence of an eminent oculist (Sir W. Adams) and the local practitioner (Dr. Benning) would not carry much weight, especially as damages of £300 were awarded against Shaw in each of the two cases.

It is not my intention to rake up afresh the horrors of that trial; but I think that all readers of *Nicholas Nickleby* will be interested to know how far Squeers and his educational methods resembled Shaw and the teaching practised at Bowes Academy. They may ask whether Shaw talked the broad Yorkshire tongue of John Browdie, or the nondescript illiterate language of Wackford Squeers. They will be interested to know how far the curriculum of Bowes Academy fulfilled the boast of Shaw's business card.

The Dickens House received during 1936, from two independent sources, gifts which enable us to answer these questions. The first of these consists of six letters written by a boy, John Cuthbert Dobson, during 1817 and 1818 (five years before the above-mentioned trial). If the allegations of the poor boy, William Jones, in that trial were at all justified, we can surmise with what heart-burnings Dobson copied the letter of December, 1818.

The wording of the letters shown below is evidently not that of a schoolboy.

Bowes, Dec. 26th, 1817.

Honored Uncle,

With much pleasure I send you these few lines and hope this specimen of my writing, being my first, will please you. I am very well in health, and shall be glad to hear that you are the same. With love to my Mother and all my dear Relations

I remain

Your dutiful Nephew

John Cuthbert Dobson.

Bowes, Feb. 18th, 1818.

My dear Mother,

I send you my best thanks for your present of a cake, and shall do all I can to be a good boy and to make good improvement in my learning. I often think of you my dear Mother, and will always endeavour to please you. I am in good health and hope you are so too.

To you and my Aunt I send my love and am

My dear Mother

Your dutiful Son

John C. Dobson.

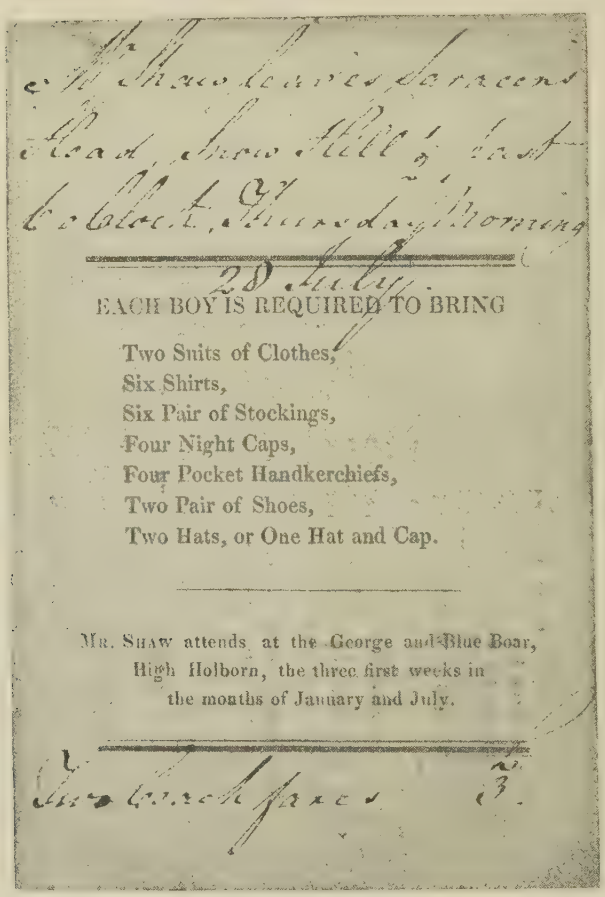
Bowes, August 15th, 1818.

Dear Mother,

I am sensible of the many obligations I am under to my dear Uncle and beg you to convey my acknowledgments to him in the best manner you can. His favors I will endeavour to deserve. To

you I also return my thanks for the present you sent me by my good Master; and in the hopes that you and my kind Uncle are well and happy, I am

affectionately
Dear Mother,
Your dutiful Son
John C. Dobson.


EACH BOY IS REQUIRED TO BRING

Two Suits of Clothes,
Six Shirts,
Six Pair of Stockings,
Four Night Caps,
Four Pocket Handkerchiefs,
Two Pair of Shoes,
Two Hats, or One Hat and Cap.

Mr. Shaw attends at the George and Blue Boar, High Holborn, the three first weeks in the months of January and July.

The reverse of card on page 32. The writing is presumed to be that of Shaw

Bowes, December 26th, 1818.

Dear Mother,

Christmas, here, is a time of many pleasures; but the greatest pleasure I feel is that of writing to you. I am quite well in health and very happy, and hope you and all my relations join me in those blessings. My master will be in London in a few days, upon a three

weeks' visit. I continue to get on as fast as possible in my learning, and like my school very well. In love to you and all my relations, hoping you will have a pleasant Christmas and a happy New Year,

I am

Dear Mother

Your dutiful Son

John C. Dobson.

P.S.—Mr. & Mrs. Shaw send you their respectful compliments.

N.B.—Mr. Shaw's intention, this Christmas, is, to wait at Mr. Bulman's, from 12 to 2 O'Clock, daily, to receive the applications of his friends.

The " N.B." in the last letter is in Shaw's own handwriting. The calligraphy of the letters is interesting. The writing is very legible and the characters are well formed after the " copper-plate " style.

A great improvement in style is shown as the year progresses, and we are forced to the conclusion that Shaw could, and did, teach handwriting. I think we must also admit that he taught spelling and English as well as did most of the schools of that day—perhaps better than do many schools of this day.

How far did this education include the Latin and Greek languages ? What were the most useful branches of " the Mathematics " which supplemented " Common and Decimal " Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Mensuration ? Surveying, Geometry, and Navigation ?

The second gift to the House helps to answer these queries. It consisted of three books used by two boys, W. C. Blanchard and John Blanchard, during the years 1835-1837. The fact that the Academy was flourishing so many years after the trial of 1823, when Shaw in addition to paying Sir W. Adams a three hundred guinea fee, had paid £300 damages in each of two cases, suggests that the lack of ordinary amenities such as towels had not been due to lack of funds.

The book used by W. C. Blanchard was devoted to Book-keeping, and the date of the entries is usually 1836. It begins with " Book-keeping by Single Entry, The Day Book." This would certainly not pass any accountant of to-day, for Dr. and Cr. entries follow one another in the same column without distinction, except the " Cr." or " Dr." written after each entry. The boy proudly announces the " End of the Day Book " and then plunges into the Ledger, which is properly kept. He then proceeds to " Book-keeping by Double Entry," but after a few pages of the " Waste Book " the leaves have been removed.

As an example of beautiful writing and neat work, this book could hardly be surpassed. Every figure is perfectly formed. Every line is neatly ruled. The headings—some in Old English Text and others in " Copper Plate "—are perfectly written. As an example of practical book-keeping it is too wordy and cumbersome in method. We must remember, however, that Book-keeping was then less of an art than it is to-day. I should say that any business man would welcome W. C. Blanchard into his office.

The first of the two books written by John Blanchard was completed

on April 21st, 1835, and the second on July 4th, 1837, so that we have an opportunity of judging progress in knowledge as well as in handwriting.

The earlier book deals with Arithmetic—Alligation (prices of mixtures), Vulgar and Decimal Fractions, following one another, to be succeeded by Square Root and simple Mensuration. At the close of the book are a number of simple examples in Practical Geometry, such as the bisecting of an angle, or the erection of a perpendicular.

In Arithmetic the plan of study was to copy out a rule and a few worked examples, with the same meticulous care and perfect calligraphy which characterised the work of W. C. Blanchard. The progress would appear to have been slow if one may judge from the date January 17th at the foot of one page and that of April 21st forty pages later.

When I first glanced at John Blanchard's second book, I thought we must allow William Shaw's claim to teach Mathematics, for it begins with Logarithms and continues with Plane Trigonometry and Oblique Trigonometry (Solution of Triangles). Following this, having written boldly " The end of Oblique Trigonometry," the boy began Algebra with addition of 2a and 3a. It was then evident that the Logarithms and Trigonometry were merely copied from the Text-book. The rule used for finding the angles of a triangle when the sides are given was far more complex than that which we use to-day ; yet the boy copied it correctly and copied two examples worked with the aid of Logarithmic Sines of five figures. That any boy could have done so intelligibly without having begun Algebra is out of the question ; and the very order of the study shows that the master, himself, knew nothing of these subjects.

Before beginning Algebra the boy copied three pages of introductory matter, beginning with the delightful dictum : " Algebra is a kind of specious Arithmetic."

The books show that both boys possessed natural artistic ability. W. C. Blanchard has copied an old church gate with true appreciation ; while John, besides surrounding his name with graceful swans, turns the right-angled triangle which illustrated an answer in Mensuration into a picturesque castle beside a stream. When he comes to make an original sketch of a house, however, the lack of perspective shows that the artistic talent was undirected.

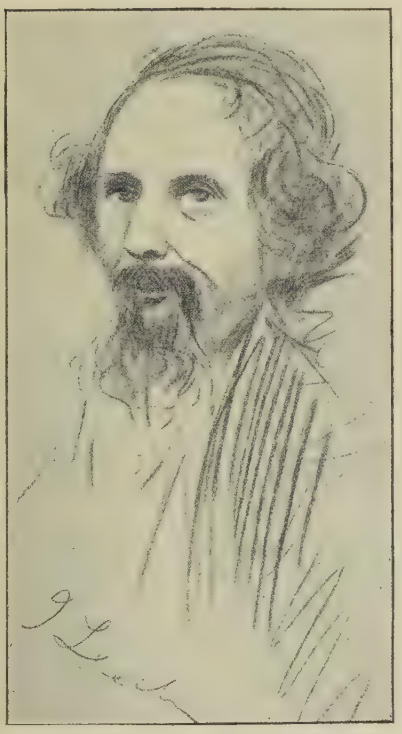
There is not a single erasure nor a dirty finger mark in these three books. The perfection of neatness tells of strong discipline.

Of the shameful state of the school before the trial of 1823 no unprejudiced person can have any doubt. It is probable that the loss of fully £1,000 taught Shaw a sharp lesson, and that the boys of the school subsequently were comparatively happy. Having regard to the evidence at that trial, Dickens was justified, even fifteen years later, in attacking the " Yorkshire " schools as a class. It is clear that Shaw was incapable of teaching the subjects advertised on his business card. Yet my conclusion is that his establishment was not deserving of the castigation it received in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

LETTERS TO JOHN LEECH

NOW FIRST PRINTED

(*continued from page* 231, *vol. xxxiv*)



An Unpublished Portrait by Leech

THE journey referred to in the first letter of 1854 was to Preston for the purpose of a paper in *Household Words* on the strike among the cotton operatives.

Tavistock House,
Friday Night Twenty Seventh
January 1854.

My Dear Leech,

Read the enclosed ! ! ! Having read the fatal missive, will you wet the adhesive on the envelope and give it back to French—I suppose to take to the place where it is addressed. You will answer for me that you never knew me break an engagement before, except when Mr. Pitt was invited by the Duchess of Gordon to dine in the Indian Manner. The excuse is no excuse, but a literal truth. I am off two hundred miles in the morning, and do not see how I can possibly get back before Monday night. It is no excursion of pleasure, but real Household Words business—nor had I any idea of going, until today.

With kind regards to Mrs. Leech, who I am glad to hear is herself again,

Always faithfully yours
Charles Dickens.

John Leech Esquire.

Tavistock House
Friday Twenty Sixth May, 1854

My Dear Leech,

The colder morning light makes my work loom larger than in the mellower evening tints (rather pretty that !). I therefore write to say, you know my punctuality—don't wait for me a moment at the Athenaeum tomorrow—if I am not there at four consider me here at sixes and sevens—if I can be there I will.

Faithfully Always
C.D.

The riot in Hyde Park referred to in the next letter was in opposition of the Sunday Bill of Lord Robert Grosvenor which was evidently withdrawn. Leech does not appear to have adopted Dickens's suggestion.

Tavistock House
Fourth July 1855.

My Dear Leech,

I saw Egg yesterday, and he told me what you had told him you saw of the Police in Hyde Park. I cannot rest—I really cannot —without urging you in the strongest manner, to write a letter to the Times today with your name and address, stating the plain fact. It is what a public and known man is bound to do.

Ever faithfully

C.D.

Soon after this letter was written Dickens and his family went to Folkestone for the Summer, and stayed there until October. The Leeches also appear to have spent a holiday there at the same time, but we have no further information on the subject than that afforded by the letter of 22nd September.

Folkestone,
Wednesday Twelfth September 1855.

My Dear Leech,

I send this dispatch round, to report myself as rather tied just at present to the Austins—as taking crawls rather than walks— and having the regular habits you so well know how to appreciate (ha ha !) broken in their main gymnastic respects. But better times are in store, and I will report them also, as soon as they shall be on view.

Ever Faithfully

C.D.

John Leech Esquire.

Folkestone, Saturday
September Twenty Second 1855.

My Dear Leech,

If you are disposed for a walk today, I'll "call" at from 2 to ½ past. Could get no walk to speak of, yesterday—being at work until half past Four.

Faithfully always

C.D.

From Folkestone, Dickens went to Paris to find a suitable house for a residence of about eight months, and was shortly afterwards joined by Mrs. Dickens and the family. Duties in connection with *Household Works* brought him to London on several occasions for short periods, during one of which the next letter was written.

Household Words
Saturday Ninth February 1856.

My Dear Leech,

My short stay, and my having been obliged to plan out each day before I left Paris, have not only prevented my having the pleasure (it would have been a great one to me), of dining with you, but even of getting round to Brunswick Square. Little Dorrits, Household Wordseses, Theatrical Funds, Shepherds Bushes, and miscellaneous affairs (taking me this very day to Rochester among other places) have so used me up and harried me about, that I have not had an hour's freedom. But I am coming to town again next month—and if you'll have me, I will write from Paris before I leave, and propose myself for a chop.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Leech and the Darlings.

Ever faithfully

Charles Dickens.

John Leech Esquire.

There is a gap now of over two years in the correspondence but there is no reason to doubt that the two families were in frequent communication.

The separation between Dickens and his wife appears to have caused a temporary rift in the friendship, and the next letter is a most interesting sidelight on the occurrence.

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square,
London, W.C.

Monday, Thirty-First May,
1858.

My dear Leech,

In making the domestic change which we all here know (I believe, equally) to have become unavoidable, and to be for the good of all, and which is made without anger or ill will, I expect of course, the misconstruction of the knaves and fools. I should be but a poor writer, if I did not know the penalty due to them, and for which I must take their receipt.

But you have been my friend and know my nature. And when you misrepresent me, however unconsciously, as when you tell Luard it is a point in the case, that Charley sides with his mother you strike me in a tender place, and wound me deeply.

Between the children and me, there is absolute confidence and accord throughout. Charley's living with his mother to take care of her, is my idea—not his. I beg you to read the copy of a note from him which I send you on the other side, and to do me justice.

He wrote it soon after he had seen me at the office one morning; where I had asked him if he thought he could decide to live with his mother. That is what he refers to when he says "What you told me this morning."

Faithfully Yours,

C.D.

City,
May 10, 1858.

My Dear Father,

What you told me this morning so completely took me by surprise, that I am afraid I did not completely make myself understood to you, and I think I can write you better what I mean than say it to you.

Don't suppose that in making my choice, I was actuated by any feeling of preference for my mother to you. God knows I love you dearly, and it will be a hard day for me when I have to part from you and the girls.

But in doing as I have done, I hope I am doing my duty, and that you will understand it so.

I remain my dear father,

Ever your affectionate son

This letter fortunately cleared the air, and during the first Reading tour a few months later, we find Dickens writing to Miss Hogarth from Scarborough on 12th September to say that the Leech family was spending a holiday there and living within a few doors from the Royal Hotel where he was staying. The following November, Leech was of the company dining with Henry Russell at Greenwich, Douglas Jerrold was also one of the guests, and this was the last time Dickens saw this old friend. Writing to Jerrold's son, Dickens tells how he travelled back to London in a carriage with Leech, but took leave of Jerrold in another carriage, making an appointment for him to pay a visit to Gads Hill; that was the last time these two friends met, for a week later, Jerrold was dead.

The Readings during the next few years took Dickens away from London. A letter to Wilkie Collins dated twelfth July 1861 shows that the Leeches were then on a visit to Gads Hill.

Office of All the Year Round.
Wednesday Third April 1861.

My dear Leech,

I write the instant I perceive the chance—to say that I am not quite certain of my freedom on Monday. I will write again, on Saturday or Sunday at latest, when I see how my work runs.

Ever Faithfully,
C.D.

3, Hanover Terrace.
Saturday Sixth April, 1861.

My dear Leech,

If we postpone our afternoon for a fortnight, we shall probably get better weather, and I should enjoy it much more. While my Readings are in hand concurrently with a Story, I can scarcely make sure of any holiday, and am made anxious by having any pending engagement. Thursday week will see the Readings out for this London season, and then—as we say—Yoicks !

Ever Faithfully,
C.D.

Carrick's Royal Hotel,
Glasgow.

Wednesday Fourth December,
1861.

My dear Leech,

I am away reading, and have received your letter here today. Charley Collins wrote the unreported speech, and I am heartily glad you are pleased with it.

My kindest regard to Mrs. Leech,

Ever Faithfully Yours,

Charles Dickens.

Getting on with the pictures, I hope ?

John Leech Esquire.

A letter of 1862 to Wilkie Collins speaks of Leech dining with Dickens at the Office of *Household Words*, and how afterwards they went, with Georgina Hogarth to the Adelphi Theatre to see a badly adapted French drama "One Touch of Nature."

The Rev. Mr. Stiggins

An Unpublished Drawing by John Leech

Gad's Hill Place,
Higham by
Rochester, Kent.
Saturday
Eighteenth
January 1862.

My dear Leech,

I was very glad to get your letter while I was away, reading. I am but just come home, though not yet for good ; as I postponed some half dozen readings at Liverpool and near there, on account of the Prince's death (the Jackasses that people are at present making of themselves on that subject !) and have to go back to work them out. Early in February however, I shall hope to see you and propose an excursion.

Sydney, as soon as he passed out of the Training Ship—which he did, with a most excellent character—got appointed to the Orlando 51, the finest ship in the service I believe, and sailed instantly to put a final stop on America. While the Orlando lay waiting for sailing orders at Plymouth, a friend of mine there, an officer on board another ship, kindly got leave for Sydney to go and dine with him and sleep in his cabin. Next morning while the officer

was dressing in another cabin, he observed that his servant (a big marine) was choking with laughter. When he asked him, rather sternly what was the matter, the servant said "Beg your pardon Sir, but that young gentleman in your cabin—might he be a connexion o' yourn Sir ?" "No." "Beg your pard'n then Sir ; hope there mightn't be no offence in my saying" choking again here, "as the young genilm'n is so wery small, as I see him standing on your portmanteau Sir to get himself on a level with the washing stand afore he could wash himself."

Another naval friend of mine whom I daresay you remember—Captain Tracy—did a good thing at Plymouth when I was reading there. He put his wife's opera cloak and wrappers behind my screen. Taking them up to go, and talking and rolling all the time sailor-like, he took up with them the dress trousers I had that moment taken off, and (still talking and rolling) put the trousers with the greatest ease round his wife's neck, with about five hundred people looking on, and roaring with laughter.

Kind regard to Mrs. Leech,

Ever Faithfully,

C.D.

Office of All the Year Round.
Wednesday Sixteenth April 1862.

My dear Leech,

I have been coming to see you at least a dozen times, but have been constantly beset by some engagement.

Shall I come to you—where the Pictures are—say on Friday ? Any time on that day will suit me. I will come at 2 on Friday, unless I hear from you to the contrary. If Friday should not suit you, I will suggest another day forthwith.

Ever Faithfully,

Charles Dickens.

John Leech Esquire.

Office of All the Year Round.
Monday Nineteenth May 1862.

My dear Leech,

I think Egg's suggestion a sound one. Therefore I have taken out the words "at a reasonable cost." As the address stands, I think it just hits the purpose and could not well be better—though I say it as shouldn't.

I shall come up to see how you get on, before you are quite floored.

Ever Faithfully,

C.D.

Office of All the Year Round.
Wednesday Twenty-Eighth May 1862.

My dear Leech,

I wouldn't send vaguely to the Editors of papers and periodicals, *and their friends*, for this reason. That it would involv e

you in much the same difficulties as a private View. For example, the Sunday Times takes Dobbs, Hobbs and Snobs, and leaves out Bobbs, and you know Bobbs, and Bobbs knows Hobbs, and Bobbs writes to you to know why Hobbs got in, when he (Bobbs) didn't ? You then either answer Bobbs and wish yourself dead and buried, or you don't answer Bobbs, and he becomes such an infernal nuisance in consequence, that you wish him dead and buried.

Now, I would have NO private view whatever—for anybody. I would send cards to all respectable Editors (in the case of Daily Editors at all events, for 2), and I would open on a certain day at a certain hour, and there you have beginning and end.

I will get Charley Collins to do an article for these pages, and I will go over the Proof, and put in anything that I see wanting.

Ever faithfully,

C.D.

Michael T. Bass mentioned in the next letter was the brewer M.P. for Derby. It concerned his Bill for the Supression of Street Noises, and was signed also by Forster, Tennyson, Millais, Holman Hunt and others.

Gads Hill Place
Higham by Rochester, Kent
Monday Night Sixteenth May 1864

My Dear Leech,

I cannot send you the letter to M. T. Bass tonight, because I find I have no letter paper here without my engraved address. But it shall follow speedily.

We have only one day left ; the third of June. If that be too late for you with reference to your health-seeking trip, of course you will say so to your old friend, plainly.

You looked and evidently were, at least 1000 per cent better today, than when I saw you last.

Ever faithfully,

Charles Dickens.

John Leech Esquire.

The last letter was written in the same month as that in which Leech died—himself a great sufferer from street noises. His death affected Dickens greatly ; he was only 47 years of age. " I have not done my number " (of *Our Mutual Friend*) wrote Dickens to Forster " This death of poor Leech has put me out woefully. Yesterday and the day before I could do nothing ; seemed for the time to have quite lost the power ; and am only by slow degrees getting back into the track today."

Gads Hill Place
Higham by Rochester, Kent.
Monday Fifth September 1864.

My Dear Leech,

Only a word to say that your friend, arriving at the office with his letter of introduction when I was not there, " elected " (as

the Americans say) to deliver it to Wills, and to confer with him as my representative. And further that Wills duly pointed out to him how that Mankind have a note or two on Shakespeare already, and how that more notes on that theme would swamp the gallant craft wherein I have the honour to hoist my flag as Admiral.

We are all well here, and all send kindest regards to Mrs. Leech and you. I know Whitby very well—used once to go to Mulgrave, not far off—and would send you overleaf a sketch of the old ruin on the height, if I could draw.

If you should meet with an inaccessible cave anywhere in that neighbourhood, to which a hermit could retire from the memory of Prince Albert and testimonials to the same, pray let me know of it. We have nothing solitary and deep enough in this part of England.

Ever Faithfully,

Charles Dickens.

Thus ends the correspondence of twenty-eight years; and in concluding, one cannot do better than quote the estimate of the recipient by Mr. J. W. T. Ley in "The Dickens Circle." "John Leech had a foremost place in Dickens's regard—was one of the innermost circle, in which he was one of the most winning personalities. Like Stanfield, he was before all else a *lovable* man; modest, highly sensitive, for others as well as for himself; though of a somewhat melancholy temperament, yet capable of the heartiest mirth; a staunch friend incapable of wounding, incapable of making an enemy, ever glad to do a kindness; he was as true a gentleman as ever breathed."

MONTREAL; A THIRTY YEARS' RECORD

Too often does The Dickens Fellowship hide its light under a bushel. Such a complaint, however, cannot be made against the Montreal Branch, which in celebration of its thirtieth birthday has just published —in green cover replete with Pickwickian design, a tastefully-produced, illustrated booklet of "The Story of Thirty Years' Activity."

Montreal was the fourth of the Canadian branches, and has a proud record to review. In addition to its social activities, it has to its credit the "Tiny Tim Cot" in the Foundling and Baby Hospital, a similar cot in the Children's Memorial Hospital, the "Copperfield Dormitory" and the "Pickwick Dormitory" in the Weredale House operated by the Boys' Home; it has also assisted many other similar institutions. The Montreal Branch of The Dickens Fellowship has indeed been a bulwark to the social, cultural, and philanthropic life of the city, and we warmly congratulate it on its past achievements and offer our best wishes for its future welfare.

Two Dickens Pictures by Mr. Guido Gray were exhibited at the United Banks Art Exhibition at the Guildhall, London, in October. One showed Trotty Veck listening to the voices of the bells, and the other, Scrooge in his lodgings; both admirably caught the spirit of their subjects.

DICKENS AS A NEIGHBOUR

By V. HELEN CARR*

BY the side of a quiet country lane, one beautiful summer evening, a small boy sat crying, at his feet a broken jug and a rapidly spreading pool of milk. Presently down the lane, came a gentleman in a long black coat and wearing a tall black hat. The gentleman had also a black beard and walked with his silver headed cane clasped in his two hands behind his back as though he were in deep thought. Attracted by the sobs of the small boy he stopped and questioned him. The cause of the small boy's grief, it appeared, was not so much the broken jug or spilt milk, as the thought of the licking coming his way when he reached home, for he was an orphan ; he lived in the home of an uncle, and although aunt and cousins were very kind, the uncle was a hard stern man, a man whose character could have been used as a model for Ralph Nickleby. After listening to the small boy's tale, the gentleman with the black beard produced a bright shilling, which, he said, might act as a shock absorber, or whatever may have been the equivalent of that phrase in the sixties ; for the gentleman was Charles Dickens, the small boy my mother's younger brother and the lane situated in the beautiful country of Kent, near the village of Higham.

Higham is a very small, unpretentious country village. There is no store there, no post office, just a cluster of houses, some small with small gardens, others larger set in more spacious grounds, not many more than a dozen in all, a church and an inn, with a railroad station perhaps a mile and a half from the centre of the village. Candles were the chief means of illumination, although some houses used oil lamps ; but gas, that new fangled mode of lighting used in the city, has not penetrated there. On the way to the station, in a house set in an old-fashioned garden, notable for the large quantity of lavender grown there, with a fringe of deep woods just beyond and four roads bordering

* Of Vancouver, B.C.

the four sides of the grounds lives the grandmother of our small boy, and with her, in summer, his only sister on her annual visit. If we visit this house we may often hear, as they do, a sweet tinkling sound as of many bells, faint at first in the distance, coming gradually closer and more distinct. We may not know the meaning of these sounds, but let us follow great-grandmother as she hastens to the gate and looks down the road. There coming towards us we see a pony chaise, the ponies with dark glossy coats giving ample evidence of the utmost care and grooming, with shining harness decorated with the many little bells that have first attracted our attention with their sweet music; in the chaise the same gentleman with black whiskers whom we have already met, Mr. Dickens. To-day, however, he has left the tall hat at home and is driving bareheaded. He pulls up as he sees great grandmother at the gate, to inquire after her health and have his customary chat. Of what do they talk? just what any two neighbours would talk of, the state of the weather, perhaps, or maybe a little friendly local gossip, or possibly some general topic of the day, then, with a nod and smile for the young girl who has stood quietly by, Charles Dickens drives on and turns into the London Road towards Gads Hill. It is not very far, not more than three or four modern city blocks, so we will follow him.

As we turn into the London Road, we are going south in the direction of Dover, for this is the very road along which David Copperfield made his memorable journey. On our right we presently come to what is known as "The Wilderness" of Gads Hill Place and connected by a tunnel under the road with the main part of the house. The Wilderness is a lovely tangle of woods, an ideal place for a quiet walk. Predominating over the whole are two giant cedar trees, with their fragrant cool shade making a charming retreat on a hot midsummer day, and a splendid haven for our many feathered friends. It seems a pity that these trees have had to be cut down owing to their condition becoming dangerous, but how delightful to know that they are possibly scattered throughout the world in the guise of mementoes made from the wood at the time of the Dickens Centenary. One, an excellent likeness of the author framed in cedar, was presented to the Charles Dickens School in this City of Vancouver.

A few hundred yards farther along the road we see the Sir John Falstaff Inn, famous in the old coaching days.

Retracing our steps we reach the great iron gates of Gads Hill, on one post is the red letter box from whence the mail of the surrounding villages is collected by the postman, on horseback, once or twice a week, and taken to Rochester for distribution. Looking through the gates we see the house, a large square building, not very far from the road, in its setting of charming garden. Most interesting to us is the room on the south-west corner of the ground floor, the room with large windows on two sides, for this is Dickens's study, and here the author may often be seen at work, at his desk in one of the windows, wide open in the summer.

If we repeat our visit in the later sixties, we shall see the charming little Swiss Chalet which has recently been presented to Mr. Dickens. After the novelist's death this Chalet was removed to the grounds of

(*Continued at foot of opposite page*)

AMERICA'S EARLY RECOGNITION OF DICKENS'S GENIUS

EARLIEST SKETCHES PUBLISHED ANONYMOUSLY IN A NEW YORK WEEKLY

BY WILLIAM CROSBY BENNETT

THE literary tradition that the first American appearance of any writing of Dickens was in a Philadelphia newspaper is dispelled by a discovery revealed recently by Mr. Richard Gimbel, the well-known merchant and Dickensian collector.

In a bound volume of " The Albion," for 1834, a New York weekly, Mr. Gimbel found reprinted six of the first seven stories by Dickens which had appeared in " The Monthly Magazine," beginning in December, 1833, and which, with others of his early literary products, were published in book form as *Sketches by Boz*.

Dealers, collectors and auction houses have believed for many years that " Waldie's Select Circulating Library," a Philadelphia weekly, was the first American publication to print any of Dickens's work. In its number of August 26th, 1834, appeared *Mrs. Joseph Porter Over the Way*. This had been published in " The Monthly Magazine " in January of that year and was the second of his stories Dickens ever had seen in print. Mr. Gimbel found the same tale printed in " The Albion " on March 29th, 1834, five months before its Philadelphia publication. Moreover, in the next number of the New York paper, that of April 5th, appeared *A Dinner at Poplar Walk*, later republished as *Mr. Minns and His Cousin*. On May 10th came *The Bloomsbury Christening*, on June 28th and October 11th appeared two chapters of *The Boarding House*, and on November 15th, 1834, was printed *The Steam Excursion*.

Pirated by " The Albion " from the London publication, a common practice in the days before any international copyright law, the first few of the sketches appeared anonymously, as they had in London. *The Boarding House* and *The Steam Excursion* were signed " Boz," as they were in London.

Authorities on Dickens have generally regarded the printing of one of his stories by the Philadelphia weekly as an accident, since up to then any other American publication was believed to have been delayed until after Dickens became famous with *The Pickwick Papers* in 1836.

(*Continued from page* 46)

Cobham Hall, seat of the Earl of Darnley, to whom it was presented by the family.

Charles Dickens may not have been rich, as riches go nowadays, when he passed out of this world, but he was very rich in a greater blessing, the great esteem in which he was held in the neighborhood by those who saw him daily, and, greater perhaps than all else, immeasurably rich in the possession of those sterling qualities of character that made him known throughout that quiet countryside, as a good neighbour.

However, the fact that "The Albion" printed not one but at least six of the sketches two years before fame came to Dickens indicates that the editors of this New York paper were really the first to recognise the genius of Charles Dickens.

"The Albion," which apparently imported all of the English newspapers and periodicals from which to pirate their news items and fiction, must have recognised a coming star and been on the watch for these unsigned tales by Dickens, for they appeared from one to four months following their London premières. This was a remarkable rush job, considering the difficulty of transport at that time, and besides, it was all the more remarkable because the sketches had been published in London anonymously.

Mr. Gimbel made his Dickens discovery quite by accident while searching for Edgar Allan Poe material. Already owner of about one hundred thousand newspapers of Poe's period, he bought several volumes of "The Albion," from which he believed additional matter might be obtained.

Mr. Gimbel is a well-known Dickens admirer. At his Philadelphia home he has one of the largest Dickensian collections in America.

"BILL SIKES" HONOURED

Mr. Lyn Harding, the finest Sikes our stage has seen, has been honoured by his native village of St. Brides, Wentllooge, a tiny place about three miles out of Newport, Mon. A portrait plaque was unveiled in the little school where he had his first lessons, and the village celebrated right royally. The occasion was his 71st birthday. In the evening Newport, where he started life on his 16th birthday as a shop assistant, and where he saw his first play, "Its Never too late to Mend," honoured him with a public banquet at which another guest was Miss Irene Vanbrugh. Here Lyn told some glorious stories of Beerbohm Tree, and one may be retold here. When they were rehearsing *Oliver Twist* in 1906 the script provided for Nancy being killed on the stage. Tree required that Sikes should club her to death in full view of the audience and drag her about the stage. Lyn positively refused to do it. It was inartistic and no audience would stand it, he insisted. Tree would not listen. Irving had done it. "Yes" said Lyn, "and what a mess he made of it." The two reached a deadlock. They had, from the beginning of their association, been more or less at loggerheads, and now Lyn declared that he would walk out of the theatre rather than do as Tree wished. "Well, what do you suggest?" asked Tree at last. "I send her out of the room, I pick up the club, and I slink out after her. The audience hears a thud, and a moan."

"Ah!" said Tree. "Excellent. And then I enter alone with a yellow light on me, and you creep quietly back. A great scene."

"And so," said Lyn, "we did it like that, and it was probably the greatest scene of its kind ever done on the English stage." Queen Alexandra went to see it, "and she was so impressed that she came three times more and brought the King with her every time. She asked to see the script, and we had a copy beautifully bound for her."

J. W. T. L.

DICKENSIAN PEEPS INTO "PUNCH"

CONDUCTED BY THE EDITOR

XI.

From "Punch," 8th February, 1858

By J. Priestman Atkinson

MORE than a year before the terrific onslaught by Mr. Punch on the "Standard" and the "Morning Herald," which we dealt with fully in the summer number, Mrs. Gamp appeared in her ordinary character in the ber, Mrs. Gamp ular cartoons. One of the regthis was on 27th July, 1844, just before the publication of the last of the monthly parts of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.* The next twenty years were so taken up with the Standard-Herald campaign that there was no chance of utilising the nursing partners for any other purpose.

"I propoge a toast" and "There is no sich a person" are such excellent "slogans" (as we call them nowadays) that of course they had to be requisitioned during Tenniel's reign as chief cartoonist.

On the 5th April, 1873, Tenniel utilised the incident of the Gamp tea-party, at just the moment when, a minute or two after the proposal of the famous toast, Mrs. Prig expressed her doubt as to the existence of Mrs. Harris! "Bobby" Lowe had been taken to task by "The Times" for his "deplorable scepticism as to the historical accuracy of Homer," in declining to subsidise a pilgrimage for the discovery of the graves of Achilles and Hector, and this of course reminded "Punch" of the famous line of Betsy Prig, "I don't believe there is no sich a person"; and "A Deplorable Sceptic" was the result. It was not until fifteen years later that the tea-party again formed the subject of one of Tenniel's cartoons. This was on 3rd March, 1888, Gladstone being caricatured as Mrs. Prig, and W. H. Smith as the immortal Sairey. (These two cartoons appear on the next page.)

The volume for 1876 contains several verses and paragraphs with such titles as "Mrs. Gamp on the Gush," "Mrs. Gamp on the Arctic Expeditions," "Betsey Prig's Soliquoy," "Mrs. Gamp on the Stock Exchange," "Gamp v. Pecksniff."

In the issue of 17th August, 1878, we find "Betsey Prig and the Muse of History" written by E. J. Milliken, and the same author's "Betsey Prig and the Thunderer," in the issue of 22nd February, 1879.

* See page 187, vol. xxxiv.

"The Real Reason Why" (1st May, 1880) was the title of some more verses by Milliken in the form of a letter headed:

"The Real Reason Why.

[Our old friend Sairey G. confers with her Councillor-in-chief Mrs. (P.M.G.) Harris, on the cause of the Conservative collapse."]

A DEPLORABLE SCEPTIC.

Dear Mrs. 'Arris, Right you are! I never knowed you wrong, no, never,
Bein', wotever Betsey says—the spiteful cat!—that wise and clever.
But here you do surpass yourself, the werriest wiper must admit it;
'Tis inspiragion, nothink else, the way you've bin an' gone and'it it.

"THE BEST OF FRIENDS."

I've heard a many regions give for this 'ere suddent topsy-turvey—
Which turnin' up the Tories so permiskus-like is simply scurvy—
But this bangs all; it's genius Mum; it flashes on yer like a rocket,
As ought to raige your name and put a somethink 'and-some in your pocket.

. . . . .

5th April, 1873 3rd March, 1888

Two Large Cartoons by Tenniel on the same incident

Wire in, You'll put it neater, dear, your turn was always literaiery,
"St. George's and Old England"—that must be our cry,
Your faithful, Sairey,

On 19th May, 1883, appeared some verses entitled "Mrs. Gamp on the Royal Red Cross" which, being less political than many others, are particularly interesting to read to-day. They were the work of H. Savile Clarke.

Deary me, Betsey Prig, times *is* altered; as alter times will, in a wale,
Which sich "projiss" is too much for me, as am old though still 'arty and 'ale.

As I says to my friend Mrs. Harris, *we* used, you and me, dear, to nuss
Long afore that Miss Nightingale's days, but no Queen didn't decorage us.
The Royal Red Cross 'Goodnidge gragious' it took all my breath away, slap,
As is all very well for a sojer or a high milingtarial chap.
But nusses! Lor' bless and save us, our buzzums I'm sure should expand,
To see our profegion so honoured along o' the fust in the land.

So run the first lines. "Punch" could never keep the old connection between Mrs. Gamp and the "Standard" out of his head, for in another line Sairey explains that she read all about it "last night in the Standard, a paper to wich I am partial."

In August, 1885, appeared some more versus, "Gamp Rediviva" or "much over-rated" with a small picture by Harry Furniss of Mrs. Gamp—still representing the "Standard"—attacking Lord Randolph Churchill, "that bragian fella," with her "cotton umbrella," blaming herself for thinking him to be "a sort of new Bailey Junior, saucy but game; and now he has chucked us all over . . . and if Sairey don't wollop him off, why, the Party will go straight to pot."

Mrs. Gamp again as the "Standard"
By Harry Furniss, August, 1885

On 23rd May, 1885, appeared a short article on the Antwerp Exhibition, headed "Among the Ankwerks Packages"—but with no further references to Mrs. Gamp.

"The Old Umbrella" was the title of a cartoon on 10th October, 1885, depicting Gladstone viewing his old "Gamp" (a word which had passed into the language) and saying that it needed re-covering. Joseph Chamberlain, as the shopkeeper, requests him to "step inside, Sir. Re-cover it while you wait." The verses printed with it definitely connect the scene with Mrs. Gamp, as they bear the sub-title, "Mrs. Gamp's Counter-manifesto."

Drat that Rosebery's imperence, I says—a intriguing, Paul-prying young fella,
With his rubbidge and roundaboutation consarnin' the Grand Old Umbrella
Wich there ain't any *one*, and that's Sairey's, did ought to be called by that name,
And to take it in wain, like he's a doin', is a sin, and a scandaludge shame!

Linley Sambourne's only Gamp contribution was a small cartoon on 30th April, 1887, representing Harcourt's fierce denunciation of the cry of " Parnellism and Crime," as " All rubbidge."

Mrs. Harcourt Gamp (loq.). "Parnellism and Crimes! It's all Rubbidge!"

By Linley Sambourne
30th April, 1887

" The Adopted Child " was another Tenniel cartoon. It appeared on 9th May, 1891 ; Mrs. Gamp was here depicted as " the old Tory Party " raising objections to the Free Education Bill.

" A Fondling indeed," says Mrs. Gamp (labelled " old Tory Party of Free Education "), " which all I can say is, I don't like the looks of 'im."

The verses by E. J. Milliken are prefaced by a quotation from the " Standard " :

> " More changes, too, to come afore we have done with changes ! "
> Ah '. I said that to good Mister Mould years agone ; which 'ow my memory ranges

All over them " Good Old Times " as I wish them was back agen bless 'em,
Which the new ones ain't much to my mind ; there's too many fresh " monthlies " to mess 'em.
. . . . .
And now this " ere Brummagem babby " You say he's a promising child
Missis G., and " you're learning to love him " all this makes old Sairey feel wild.
It's wus than kidnapping, this biziness of picking up " Fondlings " all round.
You're nussing a wiper *I* say, and you'll soon feel his bite, *I'll* be bound.
Who arsked for 'im Betsey—I mean Mrs. G.—who demanded the brat ?
You've altered your mind, and you pet him ; you'd much better mind what you're at.
Drat the boy's bragian impertence ! I *says*. He's a halien, a fondling, a waif,
And *I* never knew, for my part, *any* Brummagem goods as wos *safe*.

Cartoon by Tenniel, 9th May, 1891

Yet another Tenniel-Gamp cartoon, "Between the Rounds," appeared on 11th March, 1893. The opponents were Gladstone and Balfour. Mrs. Gamp, as the "Perturbed old Party," is seen fanning Balfour with a copy of the "Standard"—notice how the old feud still persisted—admonishing him for having treated his opponent "too delicate in fust round." Mrs. Gamp is not mentioned by name, but the umbrella at her feet is clearly indicative of what was in the artist's mind.

The concluding lines of the accompanying verses are:

Let me fan you, dear boy, let me fan you; and when it is time to hadvance,
Go at him for all you are wuth! Bless yer, him and his low Irish lot
Won't be in it with Gentleman Arthur—if only you'll give it him hot.

It will be seen that by this time, the politics of Mr. Punch had undergone a change—from which he has never recovered.

Mrs. Gamp having been rather over-worked, found little favour in "Punch" during later years; there have been only two full-page Gamp cartoons. The first was by Raven Hill, entitled "Chronic Depression" (14th February, 1912) reproduced above, and might well have had a double Dickensian application, if Dame Consols had been hyphenated (as was Sairey Lloyd-Gamp) and called Dame Consols-Gummidge.

Cartoon by L. Raven Hill.
14th February, 1912

Bernard Partridge was responsible for the other which appeared seven years later, on 22nd January, 1919. "Dora Discomfited" was its title, but it had nothing to do with David Copperfield's Dora, the name being made up from the initials of the Defence of the Realm Act of the Great War period. Bernard Partridge's Dora looked very much like our old friend Sairey, umbrella and all. Mrs. Gamp paddling in a sea of "Marconi Disclosures" by Berdard Partridge adorns the title page of volume 144 (1913), and twice at least E. T. Read contributed small cartoons of the inimitable couple, in 1903 and 1906, both in the month of May.

On 13th August, 1913, E. V. Lucas and C. L. Graves contributed a clever article entitled "Great Literary Discovery: Dickens and Mrs. Harris. Find of Valuable Letter. Views of Experts." The Maria Beadnell love letters were much in evidence at this time, and the object of the article was to show that Dickens in 1828 had been in love

(*Continued at foot of next page*)

TWO OF A KIND

By ANDREW PATERSON

"ISN'T it rather a coincidence," I remarked, "that on the 25th of January world-wide tribute will be paid to Robert Burns, and a few days later, on February 7th, Charles Dickens will receive similar homage? What other two men in literature are so signally honoured?"

"I agree," said the Professor. "But may I point out that the coincidence lies only in the fact that their birthdays fall within a few days of each other. On the other hand, it is but natural that the homage paid to the one should be the same as the honour bestowed on the other, for though it may not be apparent on the surface, both stood for the same ideals and both delivered the same message.

"Does this thought surprise you? Consider for a moment and you must soon realise that there are no two men in English literature who have so much in common as this Scottish farmer and this English journalist. Usually when we compare two men it is to note the points on which they differ, but when we study Burns and Dickens we are compelled to the opinion that they do not differ, but are amazingly in agreement both as to outlook and to message.

"Even their lives run in parallel grooves. Both were brought up in homes which knew the pinch of poverty. Both were denied the education they coveted. Both were sent to work at an early age, Burns as a farmer's boy, Dickens to stick labels on bottles in a factory. Both succeeded, in spite of these frustrating circumstances, in finding means of expressing themselves in literature. Both, it is astonishing to consider, achieved fame at a comparatively early age. In 1786, when he was only 27, Burns was acclaimed in Edinburgh as Scotland's National Bard; and in 1841, when Dickens was only 29, Edinburgh crowned him as the greatest literary genius of the day. Edinburgh's tribute to Dickens, by the way, is the more remarkable when you consider, first, that he was an Englishman, and secondly, that at the time he had only three or four works to his credit. Truly the Scottish critics of the day knew a genius when they saw one.

"A further parallel between Burns and Dickens is to be found in their death. Burns was only 37 when he died, and Dickens, though he was 58, was cut off in the midst of writing a book which showed he had lost none of his skill to create characters, or to evolve a plot that would mystify his readers.

"But it is when we turn to the writings of Burns and Dickens that we find even more astonishing parallels. To begin with, though the vehicle of the one was verse and of the other prose, both rendered a

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(*Continued from page* 53)

with the very Mrs. Harris—only she was not Mrs. Harris then—which he later introduced into *Martin Chuzzlewit*. "Beloved," the letter begins, "if only I knew who you were and what you looked like, how much happier I should be." It goes on to say "*I do not even know that you exist at all* . . . If ever I can make you famous, trust me to do so."

somewhat similar service to the literature of their respective countries. Burns, the poet, purified the minstrelsy of Scotland. With few exceptions, nobody would care to sing or even listen to pre-Burns songs. In like manner, Dickens, the teller of stories, purified the English novel. In his first great book, *The Pickwick Papers*, written when he was little more than a youth, we find him recording his ambition that 'throughout this book there shall be no incident or expression which could call a blush into the most delicate cheek, or wound the feelings of the most sensitive person.' Now, no one will assert that Burns and Dickens were "sissies," to use a modern expression, and it is therefore obvious that they were serious in their efforts to purify literature.

"Again, both delighted in old customs. Burns revived Hallowe'en; thanks to his poem the harvest festival continues more than a memory to-day. Turning to Dickens, we find in *Pickwick* 'a good humoured Christmas chapter,' containing an account of some sports, which, although in their way good customs, are not quite so religiously kept up in these degenerate times, a chapter which was to be the forerunner of his Christmas books, which rekindled interest in the observance of the divine festival, and led to the development of the philanthropic spirit rightly associated with the season.

"But to look more closely into the works of the two, one of the first things that strikes the reader is the democracy of both. Burns orators invariably recall that their hero chose no Grecian goddesses as the subject of his muse, but immortalised the Bonnie Jeans and the Highland Marys of his own countryside. In like manner the heroines of Dickens are the Arabella Allens, the Ruth Pinches and the Bella Wilfers, whom he met in his own station of life.

"And then the bard and the novelist seem to have held much the same opinion about the noble members of the House of Lords. Everyone is familiar with the lines of Burns:

> 'Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
> Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
> Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
> He's but a coof for a' that.'

"The first lord to whom you are introduced by Dickens is Lord Mutanhed. He makes his appearance in *Pickwick*. His name aptly describes him, and it is apparent that, like Burns, Dickens regards him as 'but a coof.' Other members of the Dickens aristocracy to whom this old Scots epithet might be applied are the Duke of Foodle Lord Boodle, and Sir Thomas Doodle, whom we meet in *Bleak House*.

"Similar too, is the attitude of both to the church, or, to be fair to the church, to a certain type of preacher.

> 'Poet Burns, Poet Burns,
> Wi' your priest-skelping turns,'

is a description Burns gives of himself; while whenever you think of the preacher in Dickens, at once you have a vision of the red-nosed Reverend Stiggins, or the flabby, oily, sanctimonious Reverend Chadband. The truth is that both Burns and Dickens had the

utmost detestation of hypocrisy, especially of the kind that seeks to cloak itself in the garments of religion.

" Hypocrisy in the lay-man is also extremely hateful to both. In Burns the classic example of this type of hypocrisy is Holy Willie. Who does not know this self-satisfied, sanctimonious prayer :

'I bless an' praise Thy matchless might,
Whan thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore Thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin, and a shinin' light
To a' this place.'

"Knowing Dickens as we do, we are not surprised to meet Holy Willie in his pages. He appears in not a few guises, but the one in which he is probably best known is that of Mr. Pecksniff. This is how we are introduced to him :

' Mr. Pecksniff was a moral man. So he was. Perhaps there never was a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff ; especially in his conversation and correspondence . . . He was a most exemplary man ; fuller of virtuous precept than a copybook. Some people likened him to a direction post, which is always telling the way to a place, but never goes there ; but these were his enemies.'

" Burns and Dickens are very close to each other in their veneration of home life. Everyone knows and loves that great and rich picture of the Scottish home, ' The Cottar's Saturday Night,' even though the highbrows may regard it with, shall we say, a Pecksniffian sneer ? In Dickens you get many charming pictures of home life, but surely the one that comes nearest to the home in ' The Cottar's Saturday Night,' in fact, its counterpart, is Bob Cratchit's home in *A Christmas Carol.*

" Could parallel be truer ? The pictures are the same. In ' The Cottar's Saturday Night ' the thrifty housewife ' gars auld claes look a'maist as weel's the new.' In *The Carol* we see Mrs. Cratchit ' dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence.'

" In ' The Cottar's Saturday Night ' they, ' round the ingle form a circle wide,' and ' the father mixes a' wi' admonition due.'

" In *A Christmas Carol*, they also form a circle, or, as Dickens adds properly, ' half a one.' Bob tells how he has a ' situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter's being a man of business . . . Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch . . . Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord was much about as tall as Peter.'

" How like the scene in ' The Cottars' Saturday Night ' again :

Wi' joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for the other's welfare kindly spiers ;
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet ;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears."

" There was nothing of high mark in this ; says Dickens. ' They

were not a handsome family; they were not well-dressed; their shoes were far from being waterproof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another and contented with the time.'

"Truly the tiny Cockney home in Camden Town is akin to the little Ayrshire but and ben.

"And now," said the professor, "I come to the last great point of resemblance between the two upon which I propose to touch, the love of humanity that inspired both Burns and Dickens, the point in which they are most alike, the point for which they are most beloved, and the point which attracts men, who care little as a rule for poetry, to Burns, and which arouses the interest of men, who care little for literature as a rule, in the novels of Dickens. Listen to Burns:

'Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
To step aside is human.'

"Pick up *David Copperfield* and I ask is there anything more poignant than the story of Dan'l Peggotty's search for Little Em'ly?

"Think, too, of that terrible verse in Burns:

'See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.'

"And here is the Dickens counterpart, you will find it in *A Christmas Carol*:

'Man, if you be in heart, not adamant—forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered what the surplus population is, and where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be that in the sight of Heaven you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. O God! To hear the insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust."

. . . . . .

'Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!'

cries Burns as he endeavours to waken us to the wrongs around us. And Dickens is equally virile and outspoken. Hark to his outburst after recording the death of Poor Jo, the London street arab, in *Bleak House*:

'Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentleman. Dead. Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day.'

"Of a truth the Scottish Bard and the English Novelist spoke the same language," concluded the Professor "—the language of Humanity."

ROUND AND ABOUT LITTLE DORRIT'S CHURCH

By G. F. YOUNG

THOUGH Dickens is but one in a long line of literary giants associated with Southwark, he has been rightly dubbed " the novelist of the Borough." He introduced it into several of the novels and the district finds a place in several of his shorter works.

In the midst of this Dickens Mecca stands St. George's church with its history of a thousand years. This, and the immediate neighbourhood, offers a regular " field day " to the student of Dickens topography.

Opposite the church is Marshalsea Road, made in 1886. It cut clean through a notorious Alsatia known as " The Mint." This was a haunt of Jack Sheppard and Jonathan Wild ; and Dickens gives a good description of it in *On duty with Inspector Field.*

Lant Street, which is a little south near Peggotty Place, needs no introduction here. The fastidious will note that Bob Sawyer's direction to Mr. Pickwick was not quite accurate. Until 1885 that part of the High Street south of the church was known as Blackman Street.

Still farther south stood the King's Bench, associated with Micawber. The prison was demolished in 1880, but part of the south wall may still be seen. Across the way is Harper Road, once Horsemonger Lane. The widening of the road in 1930 involved the demolition of John Chivery's cottage which was a few doors down on the left. Opposite was the entrance to Horsemonger Lane Jail, where, in 1849, Dickens saw the execution of Mr. and Mrs. Manning. They murdered a customs officer named O'Connor, and probably furnish the only instance in this country of husband and wife being hanged together. Their gravestones were discovered in 1930 and are now in the Cuming Museum, Southwark.

Number 146 Borough High Street is just a little north of our starting point. This was originally Baxter's wine vaults. It was here no doubt that Bob Sawyer purchased the spirits for consumption at his party. Next door was the eel-pie shop where Flora, Mr. F's aunt and Little Dorrit were served with kidney pies, and (delightfully reminiscent touch

this) "each pie having a little hole in the top into which the man behind the counter poured hot gravy out of a spouted can as if feeding three lamps."

At number 104, according to "Old and New London," lived Dr. Elliotson. He was a great friend of Dickens and, like Dickens, occasionally dabbled in mesmerism. Elliotson is noted as one of the first physicians in this country to advocate the use of the stethoscope.

We are now at Union Street where on the left is Union Hall, successor to the magistrates' hall of that name mentioned in *A pair of gloves*. In this street lived one of Noddy Boffin's miser friends, "Jemmy Taylor of Southwark." "Jemmy" died in 1792 and left a fortune of £100,000. He was buried on the south side of St. Saviour's church. The undertaker, who also was something of a miser, was a neighbour named Wild. On the day of the funeral a broadsheet was sold on which were the following verses:

ON SEEING MR. TAYLOR'S FUNERAL.

Why he who living grudg'd his daily bread,
So deck with costly ornaments now dead?
Who locked his pelf from every hungry child
To lavish it when dead on hungry Wild.

Or why with velvet clothe a meagre elf,
Who living, had no heart to clothe himself?
Thus fools grasp wealth, and when within their grave,
'Tis squandered, and they're laughed at by a knave ! ! !

Cross the High Street to Newcomen Street whose western end is garnished with two cannon from the Napoleonic Wars. Outside the "King's Head" on the right is a coat of arms which formerly surmounted the southern gate of old London Bridge. The pilgrim should now retrace his steps to the church. We are still in the parish of St. George and on the left several courts and alleys should be noticed. They are fair samples of many that exist in this, the poorest parish in London. Mermaid Court is especially interesting not merely for its squalor and poverty, but also because it produced one of Southwark's V.Cs. of the Great War.

At the back of Number 209 is a tablet bearing the initials of Joseph Rutland, deputy keeper of the Marshalsea from 1818 to 1832. He signed the forms of admittance and discharge of Dickens *père* from the Marshalsea. The tablet can best be seen from the turnkey's house which is at the back of 211 next door. In the latter is Little Dorrit's garret, from which a good view of the prison building is obtained. Members of the Fellowship wishing to view should introduce themselves as such to Mr. Taylor at the front shop counter.

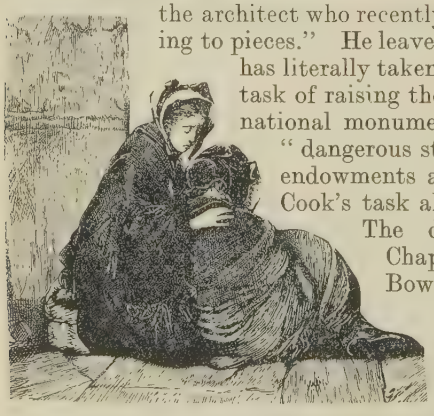
Prior to 1904 the roadway separating church and churchyard did not exist. To make it, a very old established pawnbroker's shop was demolished and no doubt this was the establishment patronised by Mrs. Bangham. Entrance to the churchyard is effected through the gate on the left. The lines on the large tomb just within, beginning

" How loved how valued once avails thee not " are from Pope's " Elegy to an unfortunate Lady." This is the burial ground of the Marshalsea debtors. Tradition has it that here too was buried the unfortunate Bishop Bonner. He died in the old Marshalsea in 1569. Here we get another good view of the debtors' prison, and the two tablets on the prison wall should be noted.

Of all the churches in Dickens, I suppose " Little Dorrit's " church is the best known and the least altered. As an architectural effort it has had its critics ; one old writer describing it as " standing awkwardly on stilts." The chief features of the interior are the lovely " Te Deum " ceiling (though very much cracked) ; the old fashioned box pews ; and the East window and vestry which are both mentioned in *Little Dorrit*. The delicacy of the handrail and stairway leading to the pulpit should be noticed ; while the pulpit itself is part of an old " three-decker." There is also a vast number of mural tablets. On the right of the sanctuary is a brass memorial to " Ethelred, wife of Sir George Reynell, K.T., Marshall of ye King's Bench died, 11th. September, 1618." In the church is buried Cocker the arithmetician to whom Dickens made several references.

Naturally in such a church the parish clerk must have his pew, and there it is. A little square pen under the lectern duly labelled " CLERK." There is a very fine peal of eight bells, each bearing an inscription, the tenor's being, " The living I to church do call, and to the grave I summon all ; " and within the steeple is a curious stone bearing a Saxon inscription. It is a thousand years old and came from a very early church on the same site.

The pilgrim leaves the church by the steps after the manner of Arthur Clennam and Little Dorrit. But he carries with him the sad reflection that he leaves behind a church, which (to use the words of the architect who recently examined it) is " literally falling to pieces." He leaves behind him, too, the man who has literally taken off his coat to the stupendous task of raising the £6,000 necessary to save this national monument from being scheduled as a " dangerous structure." The church has no endowments and this makes the Rev. E. C. Cook's task all the harder.



The denizens of Mermaid Court, Chapel Court, Tennis Court, and Bowling Green Alley are lending a hand. Which is encouraging to anyone who feels moved to lend a hand too.

THE DICKENSIAN TABARD PLAYERS have an interesting season before them ; their present repertory comprises, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Great Expectations*. More than twenty engagements have already been booked.

FROM RECENT BOOKS

By LOUIS B. FREWER, M.A.
(Bodleian Library)

THE VICTORIANS

" There is a horrifying lack of structure about their novels—Dickens is the worst offender here . . .

" Two figures largely helped to break down the barriers the evangelicals had erected against the novel—the heir of Redclyffe, with his noble nature, and Mr. Pickwick with his goodness and the inextinguishable laughter that accompanied him.

" But on the whole we can say that the period began with a development of the picaresque novel, the novel, that is, of amusing, adventurous incidents loosely strung together. *Pickwick* is a perfect example.

" On the other hand he (Thackeray) had certain qualities which Dickens lacked, and which would have done the latter no harm had they been added to his genius. A sense of form, an ability to use the blue pencil, a certain discipline in his emotions, especially the lachrymatory ones, would perhaps have made Dickens the outstanding master of a form which he handled with the infuriating carelessness of a giant. His creative capacity, his imagination of physical things, exceeds that of any writer of our period, perhaps of all English literature except for Shakespeare. The pity is that this giant never grew up intellectually ; he could not enter into the minds of grown men as Browning could ; but he could, and most brilliantly did, into the minds of youths up to about twenty. David Copperfield as a boy is without a possible rival. But where Dickens touched upon social reform, anywhere in fact where he began to think, he falls below the level of the second-rate, though the generous indignation that he shows is worthy of a full and complete man. He is on anybody's level when he describes places, especially places in London . . . but where he excels, where he tops imagination, where he is on the level of Shakespeare is in his fantastic comic creations. His great glory consists in the fact that there never were, and never could have been till he gave them birth, such persons as Mrs. Gamp, Pecksniff, Chadband, Micawber, Pickwick, and Sam Weller. They are outside life, but still they are part of humanity.

" His books are nearly always unpardonably confused. *Pickwick* is an exception, because, being a purely picaresque novel, it need be nothing but a succession of incidents loosely strung together ; and at the end he began to learn something from Wilkie Collins. What is worse is the entire lack of emotional structure. At one moment you are carried along on a glorious sea of the most outrageously tempestuous fun, at the next you want to hurl the book across the room in supreme irritation. He has spoiled it all, or nearly, by some relapse into sententiousness, some hideous infelicity of style, or a bad joke, or pitiless sentimentality. In the end you forgive all for the enormous creative vitality, the fun sometimes rising to comedy, though not the same kind of high comedy as Thackeray touched and Meredith revelled in, and above all for his immortal additions to the number of our fellow-beings. There is nothing like them in life, but life is the poorer for being without them . . .

" Like Thackeray, Dickens in the main described the class from which

he sprang, in his case the lower middle class. The moment he strays outside it he is at fault . . .

"If neither Thackeray, nor Trollope, nor Surtees ever wrote a *roman à thème*, Dickens did, in *Hard Times*, for example, and this links him with another group, of writers who wrote for a purpose." "The Victorians and after, 1830-1914," by E. Batho and B. Dobrée. (Intr. to English Lit., vol. 4.) (Cresset Press).

* * * * *

DICKENS'S CHARACTERISATION

"That Dickens was a 'self-made' author was no obstacle to his popularity in an age which loved individual enterprise and 'self-help.' On the art of construction, Dickens's ideas were certainly elementary. The origin of his novels was the vivid idea of certain scenes and characters. 'I thought of Mr. Pickwick,' he said; and provided Mr. Pickwick could be introduced in a number of ludicrous situations, his creator did not care about much else. Many of his books seem no more than a patchwork of the gay, the melodramatic, and the sentimental—the author's one concern being that no single strain should predominate. As he grew older he strove to give his novels some unity. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, for instance, the idea of selfishness runs through the whole story; *Dombey and Son* is written against pride. But the old defect remains. We still feel that the books are too much of a 'variety entertainment.' It was, indeed, impossible for Dickens to overcome the temptations inherent in serial publication.

"But Dickens has one merit which silences criticism—the merit of superlative vitality. Whether his characters are 'true to life' or not, they are alive in his pages. 'It has the life and soul in it of fifty human beings,' said Leigh Hunt of Dickens's face; and the face was the index of the mind. His good characters, indeed, are not often convincing; but no novelist has such power of impressing moral or physical defects on the imagination of his readers. The grotesque characters, Quilp, Smallweed, and other members of this class; the evil ones, Bill Sikes, Jonas Chuzzlewit, Rogue Riderhood; the vulgar ones, Squeers, Noah Claypole, Mrs. Gamp, are as intensely conceived as any human beings in fiction. We do not ask whether such persons are real, for the imagination accepts them involuntarily. Or, if the question crosses our mind, we may remember that England, in Dickens's day, as in Johnson's and Smollett's, was still a country of 'originals.'

"In the vividness of his descriptive passages, Dickens is unsurpassable. He does not, like Meredith or Hardy, give the poetry of a scene, he gives the scene itself. Let anyone read the description of Marseilles in the burning heat of the sun, at the beginning of *Little Dorrit*; or the description of the choking fog filling the Court of Chancery in *Bleak House*; or the terrible slum, Tom All Alone's, in the same book; or the dismal Essex marshes in *Great Expectations*; or of the Thames riverside scenes in *Our Mutual Friend*—let anyone read these, and he will see that in this branch of the novelist's art, Dickens is supreme. Nor is this intensity occasional—it pervades the whole of his books. Dickens did nothing by halves. He described no human face, no London alley, no lawyer's chamber, which his imagination did not see as vividly as if they stood before the bodily eye. We believe in Dickens's fantastic exaggerated world while we are reading his books, because he believed in it himself."—"A History of English Literature," by Bernard Groom. (Longmans.)

PERSONALITY

" It may even be true that whenever the psychologist succeeds in spite of his scientific clichés in representing personality with fidelity, he seems then to be saying only what some literary genius has already said more agreeably and artfully. Psychology would seem to come off very badly in the comparison, for only a pedant could prefer his own scientific analysis to the glorious characterizations of Dickens or Ibsen." (Literary characterology.)

" Consistent with its nomothetic tradition, psychology up till now has been more interested in common than in individual traits . . . Benvenuto Cellini or Samuel Johnson are notoriously *contredisant*. When this uncommon trait does exist, it is exceedingly important, for every proposal, every assertion, almost every word, arouses a rejection. Dickens immortalizes the trait in Mr. Grimwig ; but Grimwigs are rarely encountered.

" There are many other characters, both in fiction and in history, known for a single outstanding trait ; Uriah Heep for his sycophancy, Rosa Dartle for her peculiar insinuations, Oblomov for his procrastination, Mrs. Jellyby for her presbyoptic philanthropy, Micawber for his empty optimism . . ." (The problem and theory of traits.)

" The women in Dickens are mostly fainting caricatures of the sex, and the women in Trollope and Meredith are idealizations."—" Personality, a psychological interpretation," by G. W. Allport. (Constable.)

* * * * *

THE BRITANNIA

". . . while Charles Dickens, who landed at Boston, and who certainly could not be said to have gone out of his way to compliment the people of the United States, was high in his praise of the conduct of officials at the ports of entry.

" Charles Dickens sailed for Boston on the *Britannia* in the winter of 1842, and wrote a lengthy account of his experiences. When he and his wife set out from Liverpool on their memorable discovery of America, a small steam tender carried them to the ship, which stood at anchor some distance off. A scene of great activity was presented in and around the *Britannia* as supplies, baggage, and passengers were conveyed on board and assigned, by bustling stewards, and lesser personages, to their respective places. The main saloon was described by Dickens as a ' gigantic hearse,' heated by ' a melancholy stove,' and surrounded by long tables at which glasses and decanters were carefully fastened in place. Altogether it was so different from advertisements and expectations that the passengers ' actually reeled beneath the blow.' Similarly astonished at the cramped quarters of their stateroom, Mr. and Mrs. Dickens were soon resigned to the inevitable and busily occupied themselves in examining (with some misgivings) its internal arrangements and conveniences . . ."—" The Great Migration," by E. C. Guillet. (Nelson.)

* * * * *

OSCAR WILDE

" There was one warder in particular who had a profound and touching admiration for him. He was a great reader, and missed no opportunity of improving his mind by talking to the prisoner [Oscar

Wilde]. Voltaire, Shelley, agnosticism, art, the Bible, Renan, and many other topics were discussed.

"Excuse me, sir, but Charles Dickens, sir, would he be considered a great writer now, sir?" the warder inquired on one occasion.

"Oh yes; a great writer, indeed. You see he is no longer alive."

"Yes, I understand, sir. Being dead he would be a great writer. sir."—"Oscar Wilde," by G. J. Renier. (Nelson.)

* * * * *

OUIDA

"She might have said, as she had once done when criticising the stories of Besant, that they contained too much Dickens and water; adding that it would have been a good thing for English literature had Dickens never lived." —"Ouida," by Yvonne Ffrench. (Cobden Sanderson.)

* * * * *

DICKENS AS LITERATURE

"Years of one's life were simply a blank, excepting that one read books at home and on one's own. Very early I started on Dickens, for curiously enough, though novels were disapproved of by my parents, Dickens had a special exemption owing to the good work he had done for the poor, and for ill-treated children. I read him from cover to cover, and learned a great deal which I never forgot.

"On Sunday . . . I was distracted between the 'Schönberg-Cotta Family' and 'Adam Bede,' both of which seemed to meet my requirements. In the end I read the two but I felt regretfully that my beloved Dickens could not possibly be up to Sunday standard."—"From One Century to Another," by Elizabeth S. Haldane. (Maclehose.)

STIPENDIARY

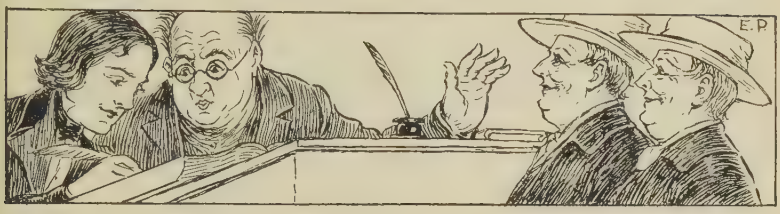
A TIMELY footnote to Miss Pendered's article on page 23 is that signed "T.C.C." in "Notes and Queries" for October 22nd, as follows:

> The "O.E.D." gives two examples of "stipendiary" from Dickens, "stipendiary clerks" in *David Copperfield*, and Bradley Headstone, a "highly certificated stipendiary schoolmaster" in *Our Mutual Friend*. But the article includes no example of this somewhat formal word for pay being applied to women. The magniloquence of Mrs. Wilfer in *Our Mutual Friend* (Book II, Chap. 8) applies it to a female servant: "Leave me to open the door to him," said Mrs. Wilfer, rising with stately resignation as she shook her head and dried her eyes. "We have at present no stipendiary girl to do so."

A DOTHEBOYS HALL FOOTNOTE

MR. S. J. RUST in the course of his investigations into William Shaw's "Bowes Academy," has ascertained from one of the greatest living authorities on diseases of the eye, that the disease from which the boys suffered then and to which Dickens referred in his diary was Trachoma. This was quite a prevalent disease in the prisons and workhouses about a hundred years ago. It is now almost stamped out in this country but is still quite common in the East. It is very infectious but the contributing causes are malnutrition, dirty conditions and bad ventilation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Drawn by] [*Ed. F. Payne*

ON INTRODUCING ONESELF TO DICKENS

The surprise evoked in Mr. P. Claxton Williams's mind that a graduate should be unacquainted with the works of Dickens may perhaps by now be lessened if he has read the story recently related by the Dean of Jesus College, Cambridge, of an undergraduate " of a very famous name " who asked who was this man Jehovah of whom he had read in a poem !

Mr. W. P. Woolliams is scarcely fair to Mr. Claxton Williams in quoting apart from the context, the latter as saying that *Great Expectations* is " an inferior tale," and a careful perusal of the succeeding paragraphs in the original article, in one of which Mr. Claxton Williams writes of it as " a singularly powerful tale," should convince him that the word " inferior " was used in its comparative sense—as it should be—and not as indicating poor quality. I venture to agree with Mr. Williams that as a tale *Great Expectations is* inferior to *A Tale of Two Cities*. The vicarious sacrifice of a man on behalf of the successful rival in his loved one's affections, is an immeasurably greater theme (although perhaps less ingenious) than that of the failure of vain hopes, and of the humbling of false pride.

And now to agree with Mr. Woolliams. To my mind there is no doubt that *David Copperfield* is the book with which to commence. It is an acknowledged masterpiece, was Dickens's " favourite child " and is largely autobiographical. A masterpiece should be read first, wherever possible, for the elementary reason that one may not live to read the others. If I may be pardoned the digression, I will go further and say it were better to read the greatest work of each of a number of famous authors before devoting one's sole attention to the whole output of any one of them, unless like the Barchester novels, they are written in sequence. One wishing to study the development of an author would of necessity read the books in the order in which they were written.

The reader who does not like *David Copperfield* is, in my opinion, unlikely to care for any characteristic Dickens novel, but he might be directed to *A Tale of Two Cities*, which, as Mr. Claxton Williams truly says, stands alone for its historical interest. But as *Barnaby Rudge* combines this aspect with the true whimsical and characteristic humour of Dickens, this novel might serve the purpose better. *Edwin Drood* is emphatically not a book to commence with ; to advise a beginner to read a tale, however good, that leaves him in the air, so to speak, is not the way to entice him to pursue his search. He will, being human, be piqued. *Drood* is a book for seasoned Dickensians only.

Martin Chuzzlewit (how one relishes the mere title) contains much of the early Dickens flavour as well as some of the qualities of the maturer works.

In brief, if I had (Heaven forbid!) to answer the question propounded I should suggest *David Copperfield* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, with, if my questioner liked jollity and frivolity, *Pickwick* to follow ; if he didn't, then *Bleak House*. If by that time he had not acquired the Dickens habit, no further advice would be of any value ; if he had, he wouldn't need any.

I may add that for the purpose of this particular problem, the comparative literary values of the books seem to be beside the point. It is all a question of taste or temperament—or isn't it ?

A. E. Brookes Cross.

With regard to Mr. W. P. Woolliam's interesting letter in the last issue, I should like to reassure him by saying that his views are substantially my own.

He objects to my description of *Great Expectations* as "an inferior tale," but I was merely suggesting that it was inferior to *A Tale of Two Cities*. I had no wish to speak slightingly of *Great Expectations* and this, I am assured, is made clear in the very next paragraph.

I agree with Mr. Woolliams that *David Copperfield* would be an excellent starting point for a would-be reader of Dickens.

P. Claxton Williams.

DICKENSIANA OF THE QUARTER

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

"Bardell v. Pickwick," by A. J. Goldin. *The Lawyer* (Brooklyn), June.

"The Lawyers of Dickens," by A. J. Goldin. *Case and Comment* (Rochester, N.Y.), July.

"A Breach of Promise case early in the Nineteenth Century," by Clement F. Robinson. *Case and Comment* (Rochester, N.Y.), July.

"Our Aristophanes" (leading article) and a Review of Dickens's Letters (Nonesuch Edition). *The Times Literary Supplement*, 27th August.

"Dickens as an Editor," by William Miller. *The Engraver* (Boston U.S.A.) September.

"Master of Ceremonies," by "The Londoner," *Evening News*, 19th October.

"The Pickwickians on Tour" (illus.) *The Cyclist*, 19th October.

"Railway Adventures of Dickens," by John Thomas. *Railway Magazine*, October.

"Dickens and the National Genius," *Times Literary Supplement*, 29th October.

"The Roads Dickens knew" (illus.) *Practical Motorist*, 29th October.

"Dickens's First visit to Liverpool," *Liverpool Echo*, 29th October.

"Little Dorrit's Prison," by G. F. Young. *St. George's Church News*, November.

"The Cheeryble Scots," by David Young. *Chambers's Journal*, November.

DIARY OF DICKENS FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

DECEMBER 1938—FEBRUARY 1939.

BALHAM.
- Dec. 9—Lecture by Mr. O. D. Savage, " A Londoner Remembers."
- 10—Visit to Dr. Johnson's House.
- Jan. 13—Annual " Swarry."
- 21—Visit to Lloyds.
- Feb. 10—Lecture by Mr. Owen Roberts, " Dickens and the Personal Equation."
- 18—Theatre Matinée and Tea.

BATH.
- Dec. 12—Lecture by Mr. T. Sturge Cotterell, " Hypocrites whom Dickens exposed."
- Jan. 2—New Year's Party.
- 9—Reading Circle.
- Feb. 6—Reading Circle.
- Jan. 23—Lecture by Mr. F. C. Dance, " The Two Charleses—Lamb and Dickens."
- Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.
- 20—" Another talk about Dickens," by Mr. E. W. Stevens.

BLACKBURN.
- Dec. 9—Social Evening arranged by the Ladies' Committee.
- Jan. 6—Lecture by Mr. Leo Mason, " Further Thoughts on *Nicholas Nickleby*."
- 17—Visit to Preston Branch.
- 20—Lecture by Fr. John Cowell, S.M., " The Spirit of Dickens in France."
- Feb. 3—Short papers by Members.
- 7—Dickens Birthday Celebration.
- 17—Visit by Manchester Branch.

BLACKPOOL.
- Dec. 1—Lecture by Mr. Edward R. Broadhead, " The Immortal characters of Dickens."
- 15—The Players, in aid of the Christmas Charity Fund.
- 19—Visit to Blackpool Literary and Scientific Society.
- Jan. 2—New Year's Party.
- 19—Lecture by Mr. T. G. Barnfather, " The Romance of a Border Town."
- Feb. 2—Visit from the Preston Branch.
- 7—Birthday Dinner.
- 16—Miscellaneous. " Why I like the writings of Dickens."

BOSTON (Mass.)
- Dec. 19—Reading of *A Christmas Carol* by Mr. E. F. Payne, for the Tiny Tim collection.
- Jan. 23—Introducing *The Old Curiosity Shop* by the President. Sketch from *Oliver Twist* directed by Miss Carlton.
- Feb. 7—Birthday Celebration.

BRIGHTON.
- Dec. 15—" Dickens and Christmas," illustrated by the Members.
- Jan. 19—Lecture by Mr. T. S. Allen, " The London of Dickens."
- Feb. 16—Birthday Evening.

BRISTOL and CLIFTON.
- Dec. 14—Scenes from *The Chimes*, produced by Mr. E. Purchase.
- Jan. 11—Scenes from *Dombey and Son*, produced by Miss Barbara Richards.
- Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.
- 8—Scenes from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, produced by Miss S. Bennett.

BROMLEY.
- Dec. 7—Annual Dinner at George Inn, Borough.
- Jan. 14—Whist Drive.
- 18—Readings from *Nicholas Nickleby*.
- Feb. 15—Readings from *Nicholas Nickleby*.

CHELTENHAM.
- Dec. 2—" Along the Road," Reminiscences by Mr. E. J. Mitchell.
- Jan. 6—New Year's Party and Dance.
- Feb. 3—Lecture by Mr. Billington, " Railways in Dickens's Day."
- 10—Birthday Dinner.

CHICAGO.
- Dec. 17—Christmas Party.
- Jan. 14—Informal Meeting.
- Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.

CHRISTCHURCH.
Dec. —Tiny Tims Outing.

EASTBOURNE.
Dec. 6—Dramatic Entertainment.
Jan. 3—Lecture Recital by Miss Russell Davies.
31—Dramatic Entertainment.
Feb. 7—Birthday Party.
Dec. 13, Jan. 10, 24, Feb. 14, 28—Study Circle.

EDGWARE.
Dec. 2—Christmas Party.
Jan. 6—Omnibus Reading arranged by Mrs. Wise.
21—Visit to All Hallows Barking Church.
Feb. 3—Sketches produced by Mrs. Smithers.
7—Birthday Party.
11—Visit to Lambeth Palace.

EDINBURGH.
Dec. 1—Lecture by Rev. J. Marshall Robertson, " The message of G. K. Chesterton."
16—Annual Dinner.
Jan. 12—Lecture, " Dickens and Scott—a comparison " by Dr. J. W. Oliver.
26—Lecture by Miss Christine Orr, " My Day's Work."
Feb. 9—Birthday Celebration.
23—Lecture, " The Coach Ride to Dotheboys Hall " by Mrs. Pearson Callum.

HACKNEY.
Dec. 7—Balloon Debate.
Jan. 18—Sketches by Miss Jolly and her players.
28—Visit to Public Record Office.
Feb. 2—Annual Dinner.
18—" Further Olla Podrida," by Sir William Power.

HULL.
Dec. 2—Readings from *Nicholas Nickleby* arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Lawton.
8—Whist Drive.
16—" A Christmas Ghost Story, not by Dickens," by Rev. J. G. Patton.
29—Lonely Old Folks Party.
Jan. 13—Lecture by Miss L. Anderson Parsons, " Rudyard Kipling."
Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.
17—Debate, " Dickens and Social Reform," Messrs. Easterbrook and Barney.

LANCASTER.
Dec. 13—Ladies' Night. Papers by Mesdames Harrison, Scott, and Simpson.
Jan. 17—Lecture by Mr. F. R. Dean, " The Cheeryble Brothers, Past and Present.
Feb. 7—Birthday Party.
16—Magazine Night.

LEYTON.
Dec. 21—Lecture by Mr. E. W. Brown, " Dickens and his Illustrators."
Jan. 25—Dramatic Evening, arranged by Mr. J. C. Robinson.
Feb. 5—Commemoration Service at St. John's Church.
22—Dramatic Evening, arranged by the ladies.

LIVERPOOL.
Dec. 14—Christmas Party.
Jan. 4—Lecture by Mr. A. S. Renshaw, " The Art of Barne-Jones."
18—Lecture by Mr. G. H. Boothman, J.P., " Dickens the Exaggerator."
Feb. 1—Lecture by Mr. E. C. Chelioti, " Putting a Play on the Stage."
15—Lecture by Prof. G. W. Coupland, M.A., Litt.Dr. " Christopher Tadpole and Albert Smith."
19—Dance and Whist Drive.

LONDON.
Dec. 5—Lecture by Mr. Charles Riddell Williams, " The Personal Relations of Dickens and Thackeray."
16—Christmas Party at the " Caxton Theatre, Portsmouth." Reception by Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Crummles and Family.
19-20—Lant Street Entertainments.
Jan. 17—Lantern Lecture by Mr. S. J. Rust, " The Ride to Dotheboys Hall."
28—Ramble to the Inns of Court and Chancery.
Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.
15—" A Victorian Birthday," arranged by Mr. Frank Staff.

LOS ANGELES.
Dec. 20—" Scenes " from *Sketches by Boz.*
Jan. 7—" Characters " from *Sketches by Boz.*
Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.
21—" Tales " from *Sketches by Boz.*

MANCHESTER.
Dec. 2—Short Papers on *Nicholas Nickleby*, by Mrs. Coppock, Miss M. Corney, Miss Parry, Mr. S. Sutton.
Jan. 13—Dingley Dell Party.
27—Joint Meeting with the Lancashire Authors' Association.
Feb. 8-11—Birthday Celebration, Dramatic Performances.
17—Visit to the Blackburn Branch.

MONTREAL.
Dec. 13—Tiny Tim Night. Exhibition of *Oliver Twist* Film. Carols by Wesley United Church Choir.
Jan. 24—Lecture by Rev. Norman Rawson, " Dickens through Modern Eyes."
Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.
21—Members' Evening, under the direction of Mr. R H. Mainer.

NOTTINGHAM.
Dec. 8-15—Readings from *Nicholas Nickleby.*
Jan. 3, 12, 27—Readings from *Nicholas Nickleby.*
26—Lecture by Mr. J. Cooper Sands, " The Fairyland of Dickens," lantern illustrations.
Feb. 4—Costume Birthday Party.
9, 17, 28—Readings from *Nicholas Nickleby.*

PLYMOUTH.
Dec. 2—Dramatic and Musical Evening, arranged by Mrs. Lillian Annear.
16—Christmas Party.
Jan. 6—Literary and Musical Evening, arranged by Lt.-Cdr. and Mrs. S. S. Hutchings.
11—Tiny Tims Tea and Entertainment.
20—Dramatic and Musical Evening, arranged by Mrs. R. Chase and Miss B. Crews.
Feb. 3—Dramatic and Musical Evening, arranged by Miss Winifred Downs.
7—Birthday Dinner and Dance.
17—Literary and Musical Evening, arranged by Major and Mrs. A. J. Robinson.
23—Whist Drive.

PORTSMOUTH.
Dec. 2—Impersonations and Readings from Dickens, arranged by Miss E. B. Martyn.
16—Lecture by Mr. J. G. Ollé, " John Pounds and Dickens."

PRESTON.
Dec. 13—Surprise Night.
Jan. 17—Visit from Blackburn Branch.
31—Discussion on *Nicholas Nickleby* led by Mr. F. W. Jackson, B.A.
Feb. 2—Visit to the Blackpool Branch.
9—Birthday Dinner.
21—Lecture by Mr. D. G. Hopewell, M.A., " Dickens the great Victorian."

REDDITCH.
Dec. 7—" On *Nicholas Nickleby* " by Rev. Simpson Leck.
Jan. 4—New Year Social.
Feb. 1—Lecture by Mr. F. H. Lampitt, " Worcestershire Legends."
6—Birthday Celebration.

ROCHESTER.
Dec. 8—Lantern Lecture by Miss Babington, " Canterbury Cathedral."
Jan. 19—Lecture by Miss Conway Gordon, " Dickens's Bird and Animal Characters."
Feb. 1—Annual Party.
22—Whist Drive.

RUGBY.
Dec. 6—Dramatic Section.
Jan. 3—Christmas Party.
Feb. 10—Annual Dance.
Jan. 17, March 21—Whist Drives for the Tiny Tim Cot Fund.

ST. PANCRAS.
Dec. 10—Visit to the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue.
12—Members' Evening. Papers on *Nicholas Nickleby*.
Jan. 9—Lecture by Mrs. Bacon, " A Lost Art."
20—New Year's Party.
Feb. 13—Lecture by Mr. S. J. Rust, " The Origin of Dotheboys Hall."
16—Birthday Dinner.
25—Ramble from Saracen's Head to the Peacock.

SHEFFIELD.
Dec. 14, Jan. 18—Whist Drive.
Dec. 16—Recital of *A Christmas Carol* by Rev. J. Howen Rodda.
Jan. 13—Recital, *Dombey and Son* by Rev. W. J. Targett.
Feb. 3—Recital, *Pickwick* by Rev. W. T. Nicholson.
4—Birthday Dinner.
18—Tiny Tims Party.

SHREWSBURY.
Dec. 1—Whist Drive and Dance.
Jan. 6—Social Evening.
Feb. 6—Birthday Celebration.

SOUTHAMPTON.
Dec. 8—A consideration of the characters in *Nicholas Nickleby* by Mr. C. J. Hair.
Jan. 12—Lecture by Rev. W. H. Compton.
Feb. 9—Birthday Party.

SOUTHEND.
Dec. 10—Annual Costume Dance.
Jan. 7—Children's Party.
18—Whist Drive.
Feb. 3—Annual Dinner and Dance.

SYDNEY.
Dec. 9—Christmas Party in aid of the friendless patients at Sydney Hospital.

TEWKESBURY.
Dec. 6—Lecture by Mr. J. G. Thomas.
Jan. 3—New Year's Party and Whist Drive.
Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.

TORONTO.
Dec. 8—Performance of *The Cricket on the Hearth*.
Jan. 12—Scenes from *Martin Chuzzlewit*.
Feb. 11—Birthday Party.

VANCOUVER.
Dec. 14—Christmas Meeting.
Jan. 26—Debate : " That the Women of Dickens's time were superior to the Women of To-day."
Feb. 4—Birthday Dinner.
23—Lecture, " If Dickens were Juvenile Court Judge in 1939," by Mrs. J. Stuart Jamieson.

WELLINGBOROUGH.
Dec. 10—Ten minute Papers on *Nicholas Nickleby*.
31—New Year's Eve Party.
Jan. 14—Three Dickens Contemporaries, by Messrs. J. H. Newman and S. Warwick, and Mrs. C. E. Groome.
28—" The Trial of Jonas Chuzzlewit," arranged by Mr. J. H. Newman.
Feb. 11—Lecture by Mr. C. E. Groome, " Dickens and the Thames."
25—Lecture by Miss Young (Bedford).

WINNIPEG.
Dec. 8—" Christmas with Dickens " Evening.
Jan. 12—Lecture by Prof. Roy Daniels, " Dickens and Mark Twain."
Feb. 7—Birthday Dinner.

WOODVILLE.
Dec. 2—Lecture by Rev. W. C. Sargeant, " Dickens—Humbug and Psychology."
7—Dramatic Performance.
16—Recital of *A Christmas Carol* by Mr. L. F. Tunnicliffe.
Jan. 6—Social Evening, arranged by Messrs. W. H. Shepherd and E. L. Knight.
20—Lecture by Mr. F. Addison, B.A.
Feb. 3—Lecture by Rev. Truscott Chapman.
7—Birthday Celebration.
17—Lecture by Mr. H. Forman, J.P.

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